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Welcome



JOHN CAMPBELL

This issue sneaks in between our June and July issues and we're calling it, quite straightforwardly, our Summer issue. And we think it's a time of year worth celebrating. This is when the garden slows a little; the rush of spring has passed, the turn to autumn is a while off, plants are settled and gardeners can allow themselves a pause in the garden after a day's activity, as the sun dips late in the evening.

In the issue we feature a range of garden styles in a celebration of gorgeous gardens large and small. There are few of us whose thoughts won't be transported by the hilltop garden in Italy's central Lazio region, designed by English designer Stuart Barfoot (page 30). Here fulsome planting, gentle curves and distant views are restful to both body and soul.

And with our sensibilities in mind, we visit a kindergarten, where, despite its city location, designer Cristina Mazzucchelli has created a safe space with greenery and plants that inform both learning and play in a gentle and natural way (page 62).

Chris and Toby Marchant are renowned for their planting expertise and have been key to many winning show gardens and high-profile projects. We visit them at home (page 74), where gardening takes a less hectic pace, and it is the process of gardening that engages them rather than a finished project. Here it is the rhythm and flow of the plants that create the garden's subtleties.

There's much more in the issue for you to discover as part of your summer. We hope you enjoy every moment.

Stephanie Mahon

STEPHANIE MAHON, EDITOR

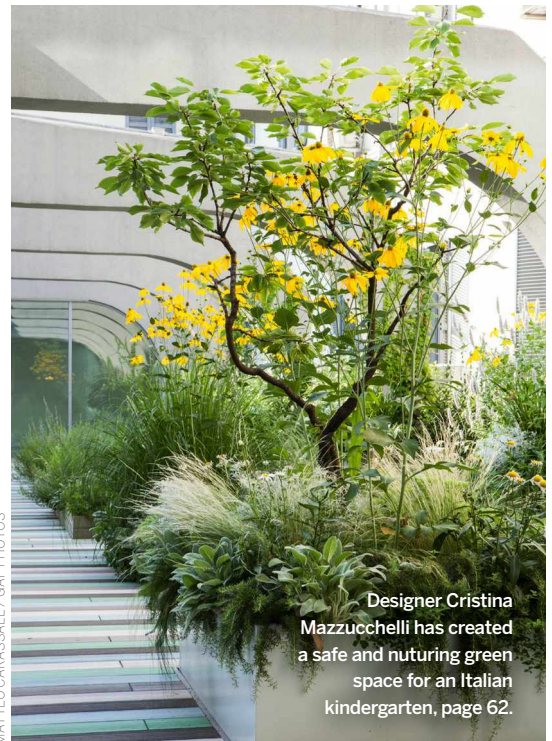


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MATTEO CARASSALE / GAPPHOTOS

Designer Cristina Mazzucchelli has created a safe and nurturing green space for an Italian kindergarten, page 62.

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Italian garden
by Claire Takacs

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- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 24
- Receive a discount of 30% on this year's Landscape and Garden weekend conference in Bergamo when you sign up to I Maestri del Paesaggio† – page 104
- Win a luxury gardens break in Surrey†† – page 114

† 30% discount limited to first 20 readers to sign up, and to new members only

†† Competition open to UK readers only

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Helen Elks-Smith's dreamy meadow planting creates a perfect bridge between an eco-friendly home and the edges of the New Forest, page 56.

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Contributors



Claire Harrup

Claire illustrates Benjamin Pope's column, page 26. "I look forward to receiving Benjamin's words each month, they always provide such a rich variety of ideas to interpret visually."



Matthew Biggs

Matthew shows how to create a summer of colour, page 46. "It was fascinating to revisit several simple techniques to prolong the flowering season of many popular herbaceous perennials."



Clare Coulson

Clare visits a relaxed Suffolk garden given structure with topiary, page 66. "Jenny and John have created an immaculate and calming garden with a real sense of invention, craft and ingenuity."

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James Basson

James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design, a practice specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett

Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord

Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent's* gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson

Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price

Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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DIG IN

What's new, what's growing and what's going on this month

Party time

Whether you have a spacious country garden or a small city courtyard, summer is the time to gather family and friends together and make the most of your outside space. So, if you're planning a summer barbecue, a prosecco party or afternoon tea in the garden, why not also help raise money for nursing and health charities under the National Garden Scheme's Great British Garden Party initiative. You can sign up on the NGS website, where you'll find tips on how to style your table for a garden party, advice on flower arranging, cake decorating and colour-scheme inspiration, as well as plenty of ideas, such as hosting cake and plant sales, that will turn your party into a fundraising event. [ngs.org.uk](https://www.ngs.org.uk)

SUSSIE BELL, SELINA LAKE AND TALKING TABLES

News

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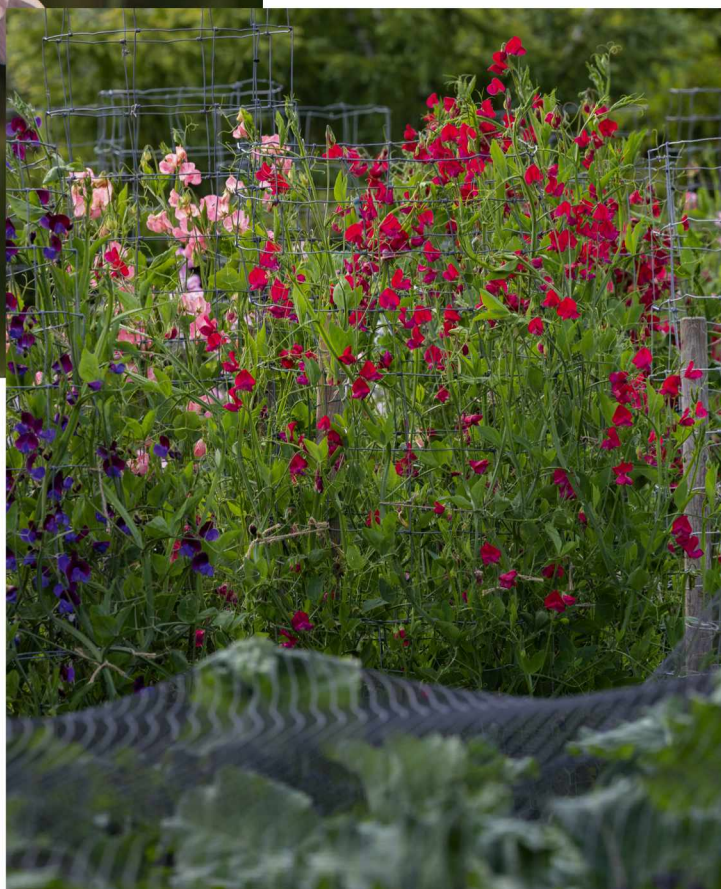


Hit the decks

The season for lounging in the garden is upon us, so why not do so in style? The new Vintage Flora & Ferns range of deckchairs from Perkins & Morley is perfect for relaxing on a sunny afternoon. Inspired by Victorian walled gardens where a sense of overgrown order prevails, all are decorated with flowers and fluttering butterflies on a palette of earthy colours, and made in the UK from FSC-certified beech and durable canvas fabric. Priced at £149.99 from perkinsandmorley.com

IN THE PINK

Gardeners at Easton Walled Gardens in Lincolnshire are trialling a sweet pea they believe could be a lost heritage cultivar. The historic sweet pea *Lathyrus odoratus* 'Countess Spencer' was introduced in 1901 by Silas Cole, head gardener on the Spencer family estate at Althorp, and developed from a large, frilly rogue flower thrown up by *L. odoratus* 'Prima Donna' (above). It became the basis for the Spencer-type sweet pea but eventually became extinct. Now the Easton team hopes it can rediscover the lost cultivar from a similar rogue 'Prima Donna' flower. Sweet Pea Season at Easton Walled Gardens begins on 22 June. See website for opening times. visiteaston.co.uk



FRED CHOLMELEY, PERKINS & MORLEY



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Wild ideas

With biodiversity declining faster than at any other time in human history, the UK's 23 million gardens can play a crucial role in helping to reverse this loss. At Knepp Wildland in West Sussex, head gardener Charlie Harpur and his team have been working closely with ecology experts to maximise biodiversity in Knepp's walled garden. The team are now passing on some of their rewilding knowledge through a series of rewilding safaris, hosted by Charlie or one of his team. The day includes a talk and tour of the walled garden to reveal more about their gardening processes and the emerging habitats and species that have made the garden their home. Tickets cost £75. kneppsafaris.co.uk



READER OFFER

Jimi Blake has been rewriting the rules on plant combining at his Hunting Brook Gardens near Dublin for more than 20 years. He's now launched two new planting design courses for online school Learning with Experts that explain the intricacies of his eclectic planting style. Divided into Spring & Early Summer and Late Summer & Autumn, the Planting Design Collection will show you how to create adventurous planting designs throughout the year. Both courses cost £45 for the Peer option, or £135 for the Expert option, which includes tutoring from Jimi. *Gardens Illustrated* readers who sign up to this, or any Learning with Experts gardening course, before 31 August 2022 will receive a 15 per cent discount* by adding the code PLANTGI at the checkout. learningwithexperts.com

*Terms apply. Not valid for use with other offers or discounts.

PALM HOUSE STYLE

Online gardening retailer Sproutl has teamed up with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to help you bring home some of the essence of Kew's famous Victorian Palm House with its new collection of seven carefully selected plants. Included among the collection are some spectacular architectural statement plants, including

Ficus lyrata, the fiddle-leaf fig, which is priced at £275, *Musa acuminata*, the dwarf Cavendish banana tree, priced at £250, and *Homalomena rubescens* 'Maggy', which costs £150. And for those with slightly less space, there is the more modest *Philodendron* 'White Knight', which grows to just 45cm and costs £80. sproutl.com



JIMI BLAKE, JOHN ROWLEY

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RIGHTFUL RECOGNITION

Britain's first female professional landscape gardener and designer, Fanny Wilkinson (1855-1951), has been commemorated with two English Heritage Blue Plaques at her former homes in Bloomsbury and at Middlethorpe Hall in York. As landscape gardener to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association (MPGA), she was instrumental in helping to create the capital's 'green lungs' through planning and laying out many of the city's public green spaces. Among the gardens and parks Fanny designed are Myatt's Fields Park in Camberwell (pictured), Goldsmiths Square in Hackney, Meath Gardens in Bethnal Green, and Vauxhall Park, which was commissioned by the influential Kyrle Society that aimed to 'bring beauty home to the people'. You can read more about Fanny's fascinating life and work at gardensillustrated.com



House proud

Dobbies has introduced five themed houseplant collections to suit a range of home styles. From Natural Zen, with a Japanese feel, to the relaxed Contemporary Country, which aims to bring the outside in, and includes maidenhair ferns and the limited-edition *Calathea* 'White Fusion' (above) with its striking variegated foliage, there is something for everyone. Prices start at £4.99 for a small cactus. dobbies.com

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The Norfolk School of Gardening launches its new Diploma in Garden Design in September. Taught in small classes at Ketteringham Hall near Norwich, the year-long course will cover all technical aspects of design and build along with the soft skills needed to successfully run and market a design practice. Students will be mentored by award-winning industry professionals, and guest tutors will include Tom Stuart-Smith and Tom Hoblyn. norfolkschoolofgardening.co.uk

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DIARY: SUMMER

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1 Royal Three Counties Show

Alongside the food and drink festival and the countryside arena, the gardening hub at the Royal Three Counties Show will provide shopping from specialist nurseries as well as an international orchid show. 17-19 June, 8am-6pm. £21.85. Three Counties Show Ground, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6NW. Tel 0344 338 5400, royalthreecounties.co.uk

2 Hoby Open Gardens

After a four-year hiatus, the Leicestershire village of Hoby is hosting its open gardens weekend again. Around ten gardens will be opened to the public and there will also be coffee and cake in the village hall, along with a prosecco bar and cream teas. 18-19 June, 11am-5pm. £7. Various locations, Hoby, Leicestershire. Tel 01664 434188.

3 Elkstone Open Gardens

The Cotswold village of Elkstone is hosting its 35th open gardens day in June. Classic, modern, formal and informal gardens will be opening their gates, and visitors can explore the coronation meadow. 19 June, 2-6pm. £5. Various locations in Elkstone, near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. elkstonevillage.com

4 LCGD Summer Info Bursts, Garden Stories 2022

Discover the nitty-gritty of garden design by joining this webinar from the London College of Garden Design, in which designer Luke Arend will talk through a recent project from its origins to completion, with insight into the moments that made it a success. 20 June, 5pm-6.30pm. £7. lcmd.org.uk

5 Gardens For Health and Wellbeing

Join horticulturist Susie Hauxwell, from the RHS Garden Rosemoor garden team, for a guided walk that looks at elements that can boost our health and wellbeing, and explains more about recent research in this field. 23 June, 11am-12.30pm. £30. RHS Garden Rosemoor, Devon EX38 8PH. Tel 01805 624067, rhs.org.uk

6 Blenheim Palace Flower Show

Set in the iconic grounds of Blenheim Palace, this flower show celebrates the best that our homes and gardens have to offer. 24-26 June, 10am-5pm. From £18.50. Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1UL. blenheimflowershow.co.uk

7 Summer Rose Festival

Enjoy displays of beautiful roses and get expert advice from rosarians at the Rose Society UK's Summer Rose Festival at the Squires Garden Centre in Shepperton. 25-26 June, 11am-5pm (Saturday); 10am-4pm (Sunday). Admission free. Squires Garden Centre, Halliford Road, Upper Halliford, Shepperton, Surrey TW17 8SG. therosesociety.org.uk

8 Peter Lamb Art Exhibition

See paintings of wildlife and scenery by local acrylic artist Peter Lamb at this exhibition in the Logan Studio at Logan Botanic Garden. 1 July – 15 August, 10am-5pm. Entry included with garden tickets, starting at £6.20. Logan Botanic Garden, Port Logan, Stranraer, Dumfries and Galloway DG9 9ND. Tel 01776 860231, rbge.org.uk

9 The Secret Garden

Discover more about Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic children's novel *The Secret Garden* in this new exhibition at the Garden Museum. The exhibition will explore how different artists have brought the book to life, with illustrations from first editions to more recent interpretations, displayed alongside images of the author's real-life gardens in Kent and New York State. 6 July – 4 September, 10am-5pm. £14. The Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB. Tel 020 7401 8865, gardenmuseum.org.uk

10 From Garden to Vessel

Learn how to use cut flowers from the garden to create your own display on this afternoon workshop at Dorset Walled Garden. The day includes coffee and cake, an optional guided walk around the gardens and a demonstration on how to take cuttings from scented pelargoniums. 12 July, 1.30-4.30pm. £95. Upper Sydling House, Up Sydling, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 9PH. dorsetwalledgarden.co.uk

All information is correct at time of going to press, but may be subject to change.

Tickets for events may be limited and may have to be booked in advance.

Please be sure to check all opening times and advice on any local restrictions before travelling.



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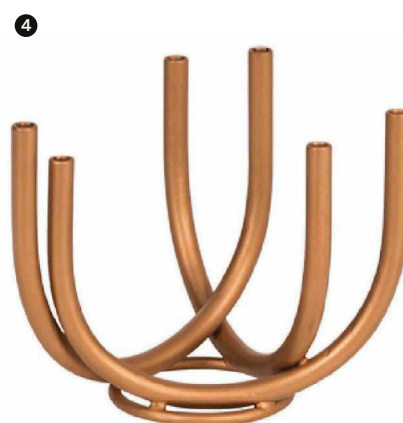
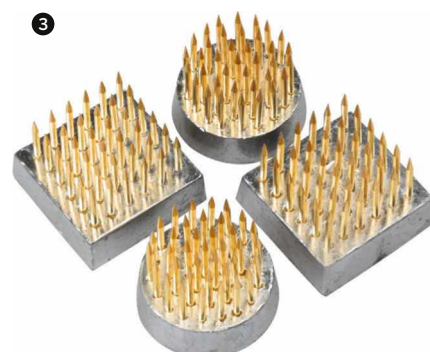
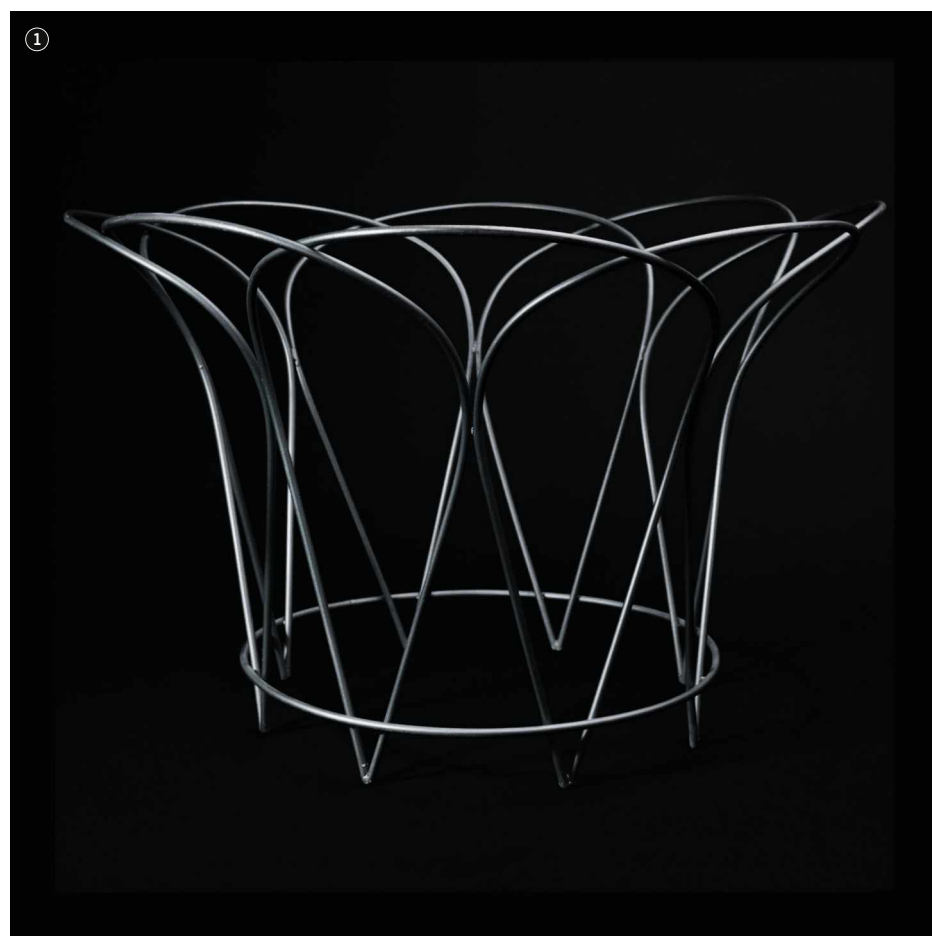
For growing, harvesting and displaying cut flowers

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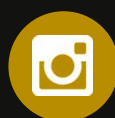
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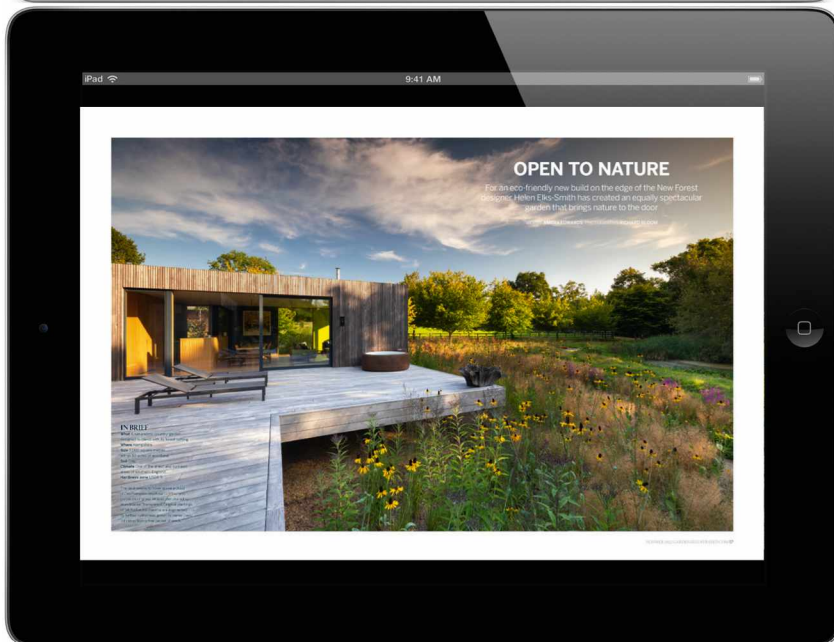
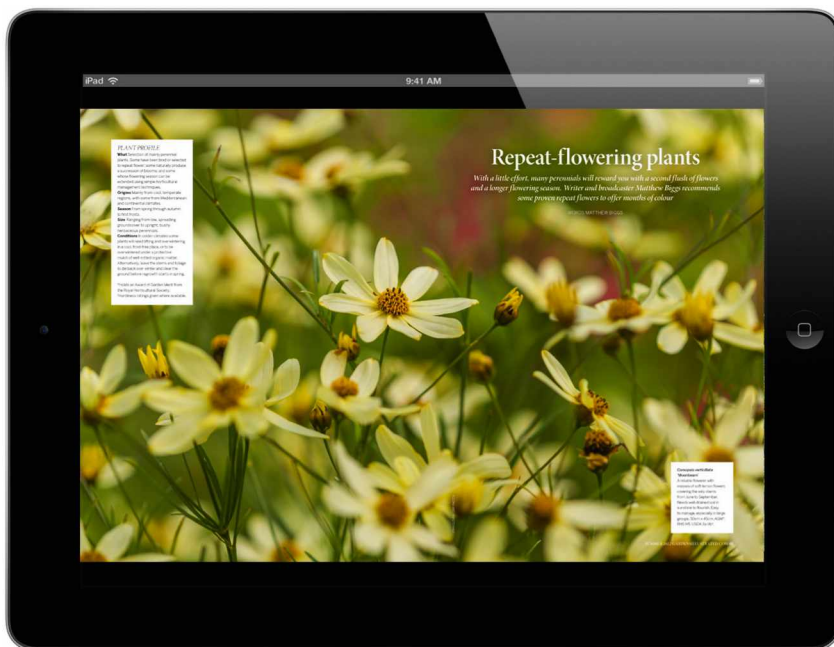


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THE CONSTANT GARDENER

Summer is the time for easy living, with the promise of relaxed evenings spent soaking up the season's sights and scents. But its unpredictable weather means adaptability is key

WORDS BENJAMIN POPE ILLUSTRATION CLAIRE HARRUP

Whether you garden all year round or focus on the growing season, summer is always a highlight. I love to sit outside long into the evening (weather permitting), where sprays of white *Crambe cordifolia*, plumes of *Phlox paniculata* 'Blue Paradise', and various pastel-coloured campanulas, scabious and veronicastrums glow in the borders as dusk arrives. Summer is a time to embrace what the growing season has provided so far, while anticipating what is still to come.

For me, it's a season of steady change; trees are in full leaf, perennials are blooming and vegetables and fruits are cropping. Late-season annuals, such as ageratum, cleomes and nicotianas, gain vigour and join forces with tender perennial plectranthus, salvias and coleus. Two plants I rely on considerably are dahlias and zinnias. Both provide much colour for the garden and vase and can take both the intense summer heat and heavy rain that we now regularly get. Years of gardening have taught me that this adaptability is key and looking forward I do wonder how best to prepare the garden

for these conditions. Simply watering more often isn't the answer to hot, dry periods. Establishing microclimates using tougher plants will help to create pockets of shelter, while mulching the ground reduces evaporation and soil temperatures. Selective plant choice also helps – in our hottest spots I plant agapanthus, bearded iris, *Oenothera lindheimeri* and Russian sage, which thrive in the heat and soften the conditions for other plants.

My other main concern is periods of intense rainfall. Not restricted to summer storms, downpours occur regularly through the growing season. Where possible I avoid the use of impermeable surfaces, choosing gravel and grass over solid stone or pavers. The trick is to catch the water, so having beds and small borders running alongside hard landscaping will make your garden look more attractive, but also allow rain water to permeate into the soil below. With change comes opportunities for the gardener that can observe and adapt, making summer a truly exciting time. To paraphrase the late great gardener Beth Chatto, never before has selecting the right plant to its location been so important.



What to sow and plant

I associate summer more with growing and harvesting, but early summer is the perfect time to sow most biennials including *Angelica gigas* and *Lunaria annua* 'Chedglo', which will grow into substantial plants for autumn or early spring planting.

It's also a good time for another sowing of annual herbs such as basil, dill, coriander and parsley. Earlier-sown plants will soon attempt to flower and set seed, so this second sowing ensures you have a vigorous and fresh supply. It's worth noting that most herb flowers are perfect for attracting pollinators and beneficial insects, so if space allows, keep the older flowering plants. Harvest, dry and store the seeds that follow, though fresh coriander seed makes a fabulous salad dressing when crushed and mixed with a little chilli, garlic, sesame oil and mirin.

For the summer months I try to avoid planting, as watering and successful establishment requires more attention. Exceptions include plants that dislike winter wet, such as callistemons, grevilleas, lavenders and sages. I find planting these in summer allows them time to establish before winter arrives.

What to harvest and pick

While there is nothing better than the taste of fresh fruit and vegetables, the abundance of some plants means that there is often too much. Succession sowing and selecting cultivars with different ripening times will help limit the inevitable gluts that come, though with some thought and preparation you can make the most of them.

Blanching and freezing is fine for most beans, but I like cultivars, such as the orca bean *Phaseolus vulgaris* 'Yin Yang', where pods can be eaten fresh or left on the plant to dry and produce beautiful beans for winter soups and casseroles. For tomatoes you can always make passata, but, halving and slow roasting them, before storing in oil with garlic and rosemary, preserves the intense flavour for the winter months.

Whether your method involves pickling, dehydrating, jams or chutneys, there is usually a way to limit waste and preserve the harvest. The same can be said for the seedheads of alliums, eryngiums and eremurus (to name a few), which should be cut early in their prime and hung upside down to dry somewhere cool and shaded before arranging. □

GARDEN JOBS for summer

Prune spring and early summer

flowering shrubs Cut back shrubs such as deutzia, philadelphus, ribes and lilac to strong buds after flowering to remove old flowerheads and maintain a desirable shape and size. You may need to thin out larger branches, cutting some back hard to create a balanced and open structure.

Look after summer pots and containers

Regularly feed with a liquid fertiliser and deadhead plants to keep displays looking good all summer. Grouping pots together will help with watering and offer some protection from intense sun and heat.

Water and ventilate greenhouses

To prevent overheating ensure they are well ventilated, and damp down the floor and surfaces to cool and increase humidity. Adding temporary shading in the form of material or shade paint will also help.

Encourage fresh growth Cut back and deadhead perennials, such as alchemillas, delphiniums, lupins, oriental poppies and early flowering geraniums after flowering to encourage the regrowth of fresh foliage and additional flowers.

Keep cutting To keep production going for as long as possible, regularly harvest beans, courgettes and cucumbers, and cut sweet peas, being sure to remove any spent flowers and seedpods.

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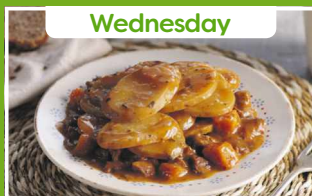
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Tuesday

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Wednesday

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Thursday

Chilli con Carne



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Gardening should be regarded
as an experimental art form,
where spontaneity and
forethought work in tandem

GARDENING TALENT

HARRY HOBLYN

The head gardener at Charleston, the historic Bloomsbury Group residence, on blending art and ideas in a garden, and composting as a critical practice

PORTRAIT CRISTIAN BARNETT

Earliest garden memory I grew up next to a hop farm and the rich aroma of hop plants laid out to dry on balmy summer afternoons still remains with me.

First plant love I am always drawn to the sinuous nature of our common hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) trees. They comfort me, carrying an air of intrigue, with trunks that pull serpentine shapes, textured bark and graceful forms.

Horticultural hero I am often influenced by gardeners whose creative practices cover diverse fields. Vita Sackville-West is an obvious choice. Not only was she a consummate plantswoman and gardener, but she wrote about plants, people, and places with great expressiveness. Similarly, I am guided by Vanessa Bell whose studio looked down on to the Walled Garden at Charleston.

Three most worthwhile tips for every gardener Every good gardener learns to make mistakes and deal with perceived failures. This is something I was told early on in my career and it has stuck with me ever since. I think that gardening should be regarded as an experimental art form, where spontaneity and forethought work in tandem. So, my three tips encompass these ideas: be prepared to make mistakes, treat gardening as an art form and experiment daily.

Favourite planting style Modern cottage-style gardening where horticultural excellence is achieved and happenstance is allowed for. I like to see matrix-style planting where colour, form and texture combine to create bold and exciting spaces. Sweet disorder is welcomed, but the hard work and skill of the gardener remains evident.

Favourite 'weed' you're happy to have in your garden My two favourite plants to see in my local landscape are *Echium vulgare*, viper's bugloss, and *Limonium vulgare*, our common sea lavender. Both have unique, striking qualities in a garden setting, and are a magnet for bees and other insects.

One easy thing that every gardener can do to be more sustainable Recycle your own food waste and learn to create humus-rich compost that feeds our soil microbiome. By connecting our domestic habits to the wider landscape, we can begin to better nourish ourselves and our soils.

Instagram @harry.saxatalis

Harry will be leading tours of the garden as part of Charleston's Festival of the Garden, 14-17 July. Find details of all events, including talks from Piet Oudolf, Matthew Reese, Poppy Okotcha, Aly Fowler and more at charleston.org.uk





IN BRIEF

What Italian garden with English inflections.

Where Lazio, Italy.

Size One-and-a-half acres.

Soil Fertile and free-draining, with chunks of tufa (limestone).

Climate Short, hot and dry summers, with temperatures rising to 42°C and long, cold winters with temperatures dropping to -7°C.

Hardiness zone USDA 9.

A mown oval lawn creates a play area at this family garden set deep in the Italian countryside. Big-scale shrubberies seem to embrace the house, while beyond it the land rises up sharply towards an area of newly planted ornamental thickets.

Sweeping promise

Vast lawns, roses and a mix of cottage-garden favourites give this stylish garden in central Italy a distinctly English flavour

WORDS TIM RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

The terrace is where the garden begins, but it is not a viewing platform. Stuart's gardens are more about the journeys through than vistas



For the past century and more British garden designers have gone out to work in Italy, offering something of our romantic Arts and Crafts style to a different climate and culture. Cecil Pinsent, Russell Page and Dan Pearson are among the leading designers who have trodden this route. Stuart Barfoot – who runs an international practice from Brighton – in fact worked for a decade as head gardener at one of Pearson's Italian gardens, before going on to train as a designer himself. So he was well-placed when asked in 2012 to advise on a one-and-a-half acre garden surrounding a sturdy shuttered farmhouse in the agricultural countryside of northern Lazio.

"My first reaction whenever I go somewhere is to see what is there – the natural landscape," Stuart says. "It was very strong in this case. There's a huge energy. I think it's something to do with the Etruscan history of the area – a spiritual atmosphere."

But Stuart also saw something strangely familiar in the landscape. "It felt like it was almost English: rolling countryside, a lot of green. There are sheep and arable farms, and woodland, and lots of wildflowers in hedgerows. It does look a little like the Cotswolds."

Stuart's clients are a couple who had decided to relocate to Italy. "They'd had enough of London, I think," he says. "They said that they wanted a sanctuary from their busy working lives, something magical that transported them. They believe in [landscape] energies, which do not move in straight lines. That's why they wanted no straight edges and nothing geometric in the garden."

Accordingly, the main moves of Stuart's design are a substantial amorphous terrace on the southeast side of the house with two oval lawns spinning off it, enveloped by large-scale, shrub-dominated plantings, where roses – especially 'wild' sorts such as *Rosa forrestiana* and *R. californica* 'Plena' – create an 'English' feel. These large areas of planting might even be described as shrubberies, if that wasn't such an unfashionable term.

The terrace is where the garden begins, but it is emphatically not a viewing platform. Stuart says his gardens are more about the journeys through than vistas and perspectives.

To continue turn to page 37 ▷

Above *Rosa* 'Rambling Rector', here used as a link plant, is one of a number of classic cottage-garden plants deployed by this English designer for his clients, who were previously based in London.

Right above The rose *R. Munstead Wood* (= 'Ausbernard') makes a deep, rich pool of red amid clipped box and nepeta, gathered around a secluded terrace with seating. Beyond, white foxglove plumes and golden *Stipa gigantea* light up shadier areas.

Right below A mown path wends its way through the grassy slope above the swimming pool, with thickets including wild species roses such as *R. rubiginosa* and – beyond – more *R. 'Rambling Rector'*.



USING PLANTS FOR ATMOSPHERE

The owners of this designed garden wanted an escape, a place of sanctuary and privacy that would be both embedded in the local landscape but also possessed of its own character – with more than a soupçon of Englishness about it. Designer Stuart Barfoot instilled all these characteristics by means of big, shrubby plantings – with roses to the fore – almost as if to cocoon the house.

Rosa 'Scharlachglut' is a key plant that works well in a large-scale context, Stuart says. "They are early into flower so they are never out-competed, and you get lovely reflections in the swimming pool. The huge, shiny red hips are a bonus in autumn, offset by grasses and asters." Species roses have been added to bolster the 'wild' atmosphere of the garden, which is surrounded by what Stuart calls "ornamental thickets". *Rosa forrestiana* is a vigorous and healthy wild rose with a cascading habit, smothered in rich-pink single flowers beloved by bees. It has small but attractive hips in the autumn. Stuart uses it to "provide height and create pools of density against which to work the softer, more ephemeral herbaceous plantings".

Below the shrubs are perennial plants that provide colour and softer textural variation. Wild red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) is used in areas set aside for rewilding and meadows. "Apart from its beauty in habit – gently weaving though the wild grasses – it also provides a haze of colour here and there, which changes depending how much is flowering," Stuart says. Several cultivars of cranesbill geraniums augment the cottage-core feel of the planting style; *Geranium himalayense* 'Derrick Cook' is favoured as "a gentle grower but strong, with soft blue-white flowers and pale veins".



People don't want a huge, baking-hot terrace – they want a space children can play on. Personally, I don't like lawns, but what is the alternative?



On either side of the lawn on the main garden front are shrubberies, lent structure by clipped box shapes, offset by the intense blue of *Salvia x sylvestris* 'Mainacht', foxglove spires and the acid-green of *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*.



Roses are supported by other sturdy shrubs, such as deutzia, philadelphus and *Viburnum opulus*, along with traditional English cottage-garden subjects

▷ “The terrace, which is a kind of elongated kidney-shape, has been designed to encourage people to move away from the house, to become immersed in the garden,” he explains.

The roses are supported by other sturdy shrubs, such as deutzia, philadelphus, euphorbias and *Viburnum opulus*, along with traditional English cottage-garden subjects including penstemons, foxgloves, alliums, nepetas and geraniums. In that sense it truly is a little piece of England abroad. The plants need to be on the tough side, given that temperatures here can soar to 42°C in summer and drop to -7°C in winter, with up to a metre of snow.

The main area of shrub plantings gives on to a large mown oval lawn, which meets an annual ‘pictorial’ wildflower meadow beyond in a deliberately abrupt manner. An irrigated lawn is a controversial feature today, but Stuart is unrepentant. “I’m very practical-minded,” he says. “I was a gardener for years. People don’t want a huge, baking-hot terrace – they want a space children can play on. Personally, ▷

A little farther from the house, the planting becomes even more unburdened in tone – groups of *Allium hollandicum* ‘Purple Sensation’ with nepeta and the spiky foliage of *Cynara cardunculus*, set against a backdrop of *Rosa moyesii* and white *Philadelphus coronarius*.





▷ I don't like lawns, but there are vipers climbing in the roses, and they have had snakes in the house, so a lawn for playing on seemed the safest option for the children."

Planting around a smaller oval lawn on the southwest side of the house adds yolky yellows to the mix – roses *R. Golden Celebration* (= 'Ausgold') and *R. 'Golden Wings'* – with more purples and blues from clematis, ceratostigmas, *Buddleja 'Lochin'* and geraniums, including *G. 'Brookside'*, *G. 'Orion'* and *G. Rozanne* (= 'Gerwat'). To the northeast of the house, a wide, grassy path leads down to the swimming pool and its terrace, surrounded by *Hydrangea paniculata*, *Rosa 'Scharlachglut'* and, for later in the season, groups of asters including *Symphyotrichum 'Little Carlow'*. This is a windy spot planted with *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum 'Mariesii'*, cotoneaster, wild pear and apple, crataegus, magnolias and wild roses, and is the only area where grasses are used, as an understorey planting.

As with many designed gardens, Stuart's overall policy has been to adopt a more informal, wilder feel the farther away one moves from the house. In this case it means the creation of what he calls "semi-wild thickets" on the fringes of the garden as it melds with the surrounding fields. "As a child I spent a lot of time on Old Winchester Hill," he explains. "And I have been really inspired by the flora of the steep slopes there – crataegus, sloes, wild apples, peas and so on. I would go in and make a den, where it was dark, and then emerge into the light. I tried to recreate something of that feeling."

A steep bank on the northwest side of the house rises to a plateau where an olive plantation had been struggling. Stuart replaced this with a thicket including holm oaks to make a visual screen and sound barrier to cut out any noise from the road. But perhaps the most notable feature at the edge of the garden is a sculptural group of cypresses, clearly visible from the large oval lawn and indeed most parts of the garden. These were in situ when the clients moved in and are one of the few retained elements. It is not known why they were planted there. But perhaps every garden needs a little mystery. □

Above The scarlet *Rosa 'Scharlachglut'* is the rose that perhaps lends most definition to the garden, cropping up as a link plant across the piece. Here, it adds excitement to the swimming pool area, with roses *R. 'Rambling Rector'* on the banks, and *R. Iceberg* (= 'Korbin') on the pergola next to the house. Later on in the season, green mounds of *Hydrangea paniculata* take centre stage, alongside the rugosa rose *R. 'Blanche Double de Coubert'* with asters and *Pennisetum* grasses coming into play by late summer.

Right A sculptural group of cypresses, set in the grassy meadow at the fringes of the garden, helps to anchor everything in place. In the foreground are the frothy *Hesperis matronalis* var. *albiflora*, white foxgloves, nepeta, *Geranium 'Brookside'* and *Nicotiana glauca*, together with the box balls, which provide a sense of structural weight to the overall planting design.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Stuart's work at stuartbarfoot.com

As with many gardens, Stuart's overall policy has been to adopt a more informal, wilder feel the farther away one moves from the house





IN BRIEF

What A small urban garden inspired by the plants of the Baltic coast.

Where Northampton.

Size 12m x 4.5m.

Soil Poor, dry, very free-draining.

Climate Temperate.

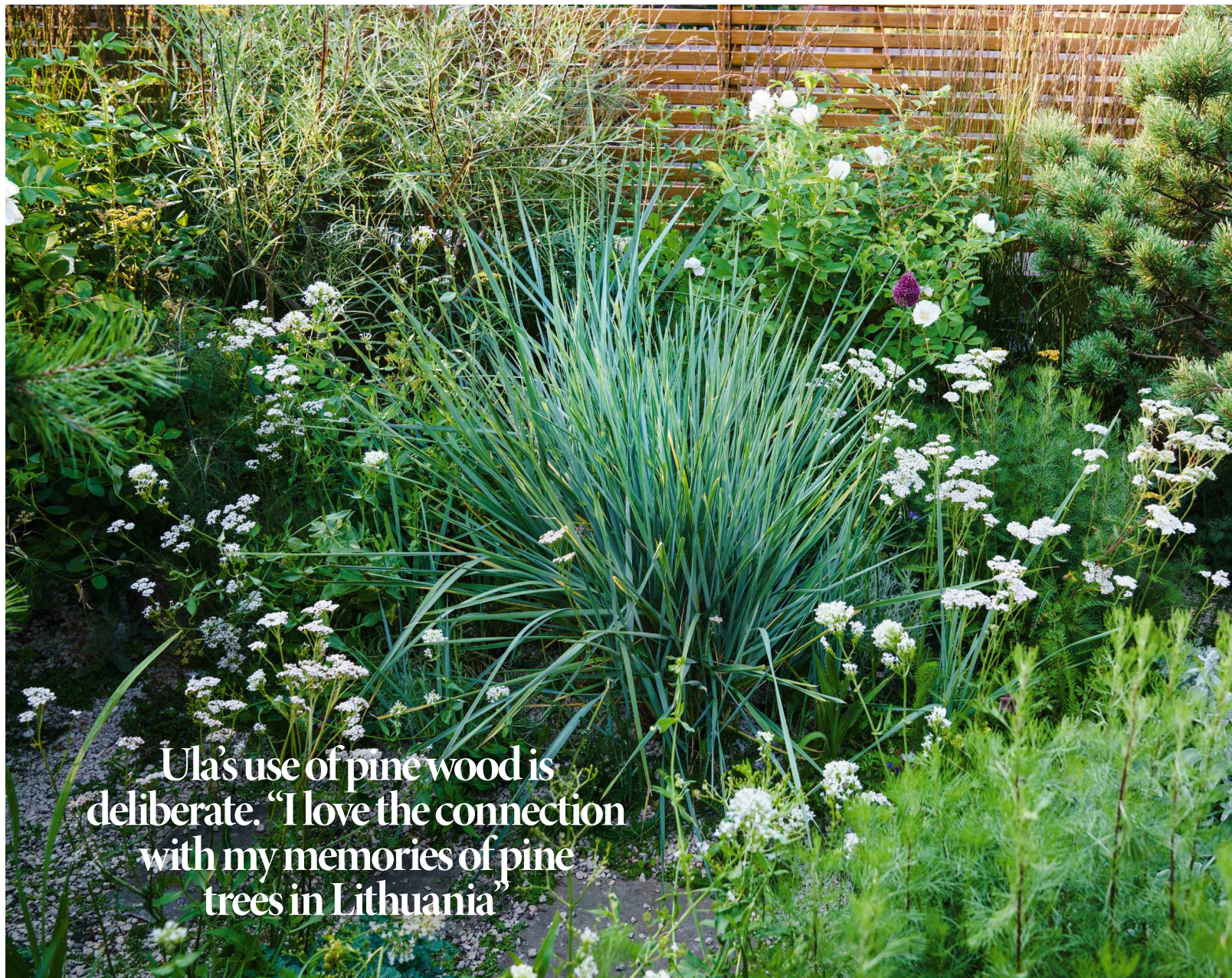
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

Garden designer Ula Maria moved her award-winning show garden from the 2017 RHS Tatton Park Flower Show to her father's modest garden. A bushy *Pinus sylvestris* 'Watereri' creates a focal point for this tapestry of texture and muted colours, which is filled with plants that remind Ula of her Lithuanian childhood, including *Centranthus ruber* 'Albus', *Stachys byzantina*, *Helichrysum italicum*, rosemary and sedums.

HOMeward BOUND

An award-winning show garden from designer Ula Maria has been given a second life in her father's small plot

WORDS RAE SPENCER-JONES PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE



Ula's use of pine wood is deliberate. "I love the connection with my memories of pine trees in Lithuania"

Ula Maria's memories of childhood are filled with family and gardening. She spent her early years in Lithuania and her recollections of that time – and much of the Baltic state's flora – have worked their way into many of her gardens. She credits her Lithuanian grandmother Terese for her green fingers. "My grandmother loved gardening and had an amazing collection of lilies," says Ula. "We grew absolutely everything. All our own vegetables, fruit and flowers."

Today, the award-winning designer calls London home, but it was to her childhood home she looked for inspiration when designing the show garden that won her the coveted title of RHS Young Designer of the Year at the 2017 RHS Flower Show Tatton Park. So it seems especially fitting that this garden – an ode to idyllic summers spent on Lithuania's Baltic coast – should find a new home in her father's small Northampton garden. "At the end of the show all the blousy plants were sold," she says. "The leftovers were grasses and foliage plants. These particular plants love very poor soil, so they were perfect for my father's garden where the soil is really bad."

The plants' new home is a tiny plot (just 12m by 4m) behind her father's terraced house – a typical Victorian red-brick building,

overlooked from all angles. Ula doesn't exaggerate about the soil. Dry, devoid of nutrients and very free-draining, it was filled with rubble. The prospect of installing a lush green lawn was never on the cards.

Although the original boundaries of low brick walls offer little privacy, they partially allow an opportunity to 'borrow' next-door's shrubs. Elsewhere the walls were fitted with screens of slatted pine timber providing height and seclusion balanced by a sense of spaciousness from light filtering through the slats.

At the back of the garden, a cosy pine-wood pergola is an echo of the screens. Retrofitted from Ula's Tatton garden it was cut to fit the space, the offcuts of timber reappearing as a simple bench. This spirit of reuse and recycling is evident throughout the garden from the plants, to the pergola, and the reclaimed York-stone paving that winds its way through the planting beds.

Ula's use of pine wood is deliberate. "I love the connection with my memories of pine trees in Lithuania," she says. Despite its minuscule proportions, the garden could not go without actual pine trees so Ula chose *Pinus sylvestris* 'Watereri' because she says, "it's very slow growing and it won't overwhelm the garden".

Other plants reminiscent of her childhood are two cultivars of *Rosa rugosa*, and *Centranthus ruber* 'Albus', a plant she remembers self-seeding in the garden in Lithuania. Mediterranean plants, ▷

*Hardiness ratings given where available.

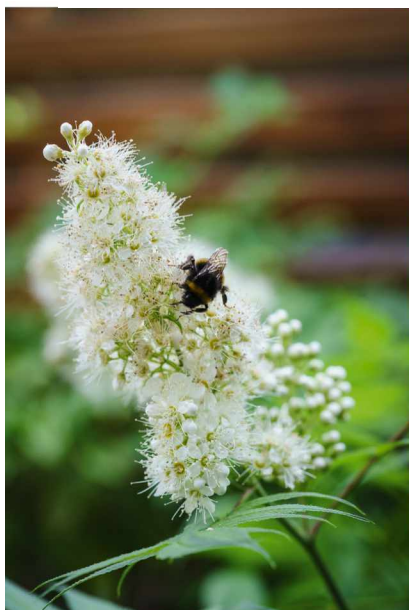


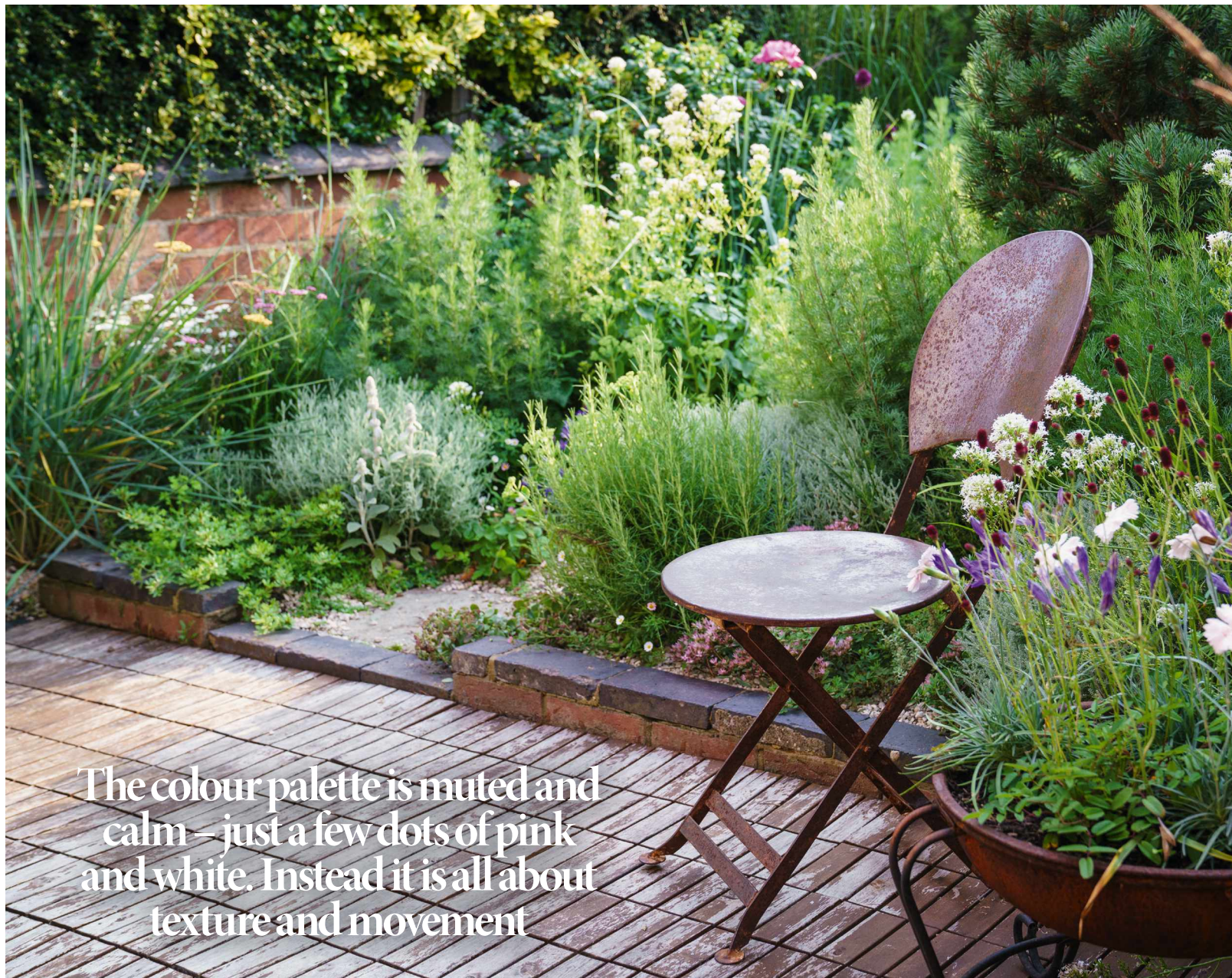
Left In many of Ula Maria's planting schemes, texture takes precedence over colour. Here the calm palette is mostly shades of green with the occasional pop of white and pink flowers. The grass-like foliage of *Allium sphaerocephalon* and the evergreen needles of *Pinus sylvestris* 'Watereri' are a textural feast for the eyes.

Right The lush planting of *Artemisia abrotanum*, sedums and stachys is only watered as a last resort in very long, hot spells, otherwise it takes care of itself.

Below (from left) *Sorbaria sorbifolia*, with downy racemes of white flowers, is happy in full sun or part shade. 1.5m x 1.5m. RHS H5, USDA 2a-8b†.

***Crocosmia Orange Pekoe* (= 'Pek Or')** establishes healthy clumps of sword-like leaves and vibrant orange-yellow flowers. 70cm x 20cm. ***Phedimus kamtschaticus Atlantis* (= 'Nonsitnal')** is a groundcover option that thrives in poor, dry soil and tolerates severe droughts. 30cm x 30cm. RHS H7.





The colour palette is muted and calm – just a few dots of pink and white. Instead it is all about texture and movement

▷ such as *Helichrysum italicum*, rosemary and sedums, are reminiscent of the Baltic coast, and these provide a practical planting solution to the impoverished soil where a lawn would have struggled.

The colour palette is muted and calm – just a few dots of pink and white. Instead it is all about texture and movement. Favourites are the wiry stems and lacy foliage of fennel, and the tall grass *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' with its feathery flowerheads that last long into winter. "I planted it at the back of the garden in front of the pergola to create a little den. You would never know you're in the middle of a town," she says.

Creating this pocket-sized garden was an organic process. It was a family affair that involved regular get togethers with her father and her brother, who erected the pergola, built the boundary fencing, and laid the path and timber paving tiles for the patio.

"We never sat down and actually designed the garden," says Ula. "Creating it was a stage-by-stage process over three years. It was so interesting for us to work together as a family, and we were really sad when it was over, but it brought us, and our happy memories of Lithuania, together." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Ula's work at ulamaria.com

Creating privacy in the garden

- **An enclosed pergola with a roof and sides** helps to minimise being overlooked from behind, above and either side of the property. If situated away from the house, as here, it also creates a destination to encourage journeying through the garden.
- **Planting tall grasses**, such as *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', in front of the pergola helps to create the feeling of a cosy den and a sense of enclosure.
- **Slatted timber screens** raise the height of the boundary walls enclosing the garden while allowing light to filter through.
- **A careful choice of plants** intensifies the sense of privacy in the urban environment: taller salix along the boundaries, medium-sized evergreen shrubs and small, slow-growing trees, such as the evergreen Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris* 'Watereri', provide year-round structure and cover.



Left One of a pair of garden chairs that Ula found on an antique stall at a French market. Harmonising with the patio of wooden setts, Ula describes the patina of the metal as “shining in the sunshine like a fish scale”.

Right A York-stone slab atop offcuts of wood creates an informal table on which to place a bowl of sedums.

Below (from left) *Rosa rugosa* ‘Alba’ with its pure-white blooms and faint perfume is a favourite memory from Ula’s childhood in Lithuania where they are naturalised in the Baltic landscape. 1.5m x 1.5m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b. *Stachys byzantina* with its velvety silver leaves is a Mediterranean groundcover that does well in dry and nutrient-poor soils. 20cm x 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b. *Potentilla fruticosa* ‘Daydawn’ adds an interesting texture with its dark, pinnate leaves that contrast with the profusion of pale-peach flowers, which cover the shrub from spring to autumn. 1.2m x 1.5m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.





PLANT PROFILE

What Selection of mainly perennial plants. Some have been bred or selected to repeat flower; some naturally produce a succession of blooms; and some whose flowering season can be extended using simple horticultural management techniques.

Origins Mainly from cool, temperate regions, with some from Mediterranean and continental climates.

Season From spring through autumn to first frosts.

Size Ranging from low, spreading groundcover to upright, bushy herbaceous perennials.

Conditions In colder climates some plants will need lifting and overwintering in a cool, frost-free place, or to be overwintered under a protective mulch of well-rotted organic matter. Alternatively, leave the stems and foliage to die back over winter and clear the ground before regrowth starts in spring.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

†Hardiness ratings given where available.

Repeat-flowering plants

With a little effort, many perennials will reward you with a second flush of flowers and a longer flowering season. Writer and broadcaster Matthew Biggs recommends some proven repeat flowerers to offer months of colour

WORDS MATTHEW BIGGS

Coreopsis verticillata
'Moonbeam'

A reliable flowerer with masses of soft-lemon flowers covering the wiry stems from June to September. Needs well-drained soil in sunshine to flourish. Easy to manage, especially in large groups. 50cm x 45cm. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b†.



***Penstemon* 'Raven'**

In summer and early autumn, upright stems bear large, purple-black flowers with white throats marked with blurred lines of red-purple. Needs a sunny position and dislikes damp soil over winter. Improve drainage with horticultural grit. 1m x 30cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 6a-9b.



Astrantia 'Hadspen Blood'

Dark-crimson pincushion flowers are displayed in clusters above deep-green foliage. Flowers May to October. Happy in part shade, but best in moist, rich soil in sunshine. Makes an excellent cut flower. 90cm x 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.



Dahlia 'Bishop of Leicester'

Clump-forming perennial, with toothed, pinnate leaves. Pale-lavender flowers are carried from midsummer to early autumn. Grow in fertile, well-drained soil, enriched with well-rotted matter. 1m x 50cm. RHS H3.

Mention repeat flowering and most people think of roses. An early record, in *Flora overo cultura di Fiori*, published in Italy in 1638, alludes to 'a rose that produces flowers every month'. This desirable characteristic was a focus of eminent breeder David Austin, whose English

Roses have two flushes of early season flower, followed by sporadic flowering, then a larger flush later in the season. Such a major contribution is particularly valued in small gardens, and the mid pink *R. Mary Rose* (= 'Ausmary') is a fine example.

Plants repeat flower in various ways. Some naturally produce more than one flush of flower through the growing season; *Cistus*, for example, produces a mass of flowers over several weeks, individual blooms lasting just a single day. I recall a visit to the Chelsea Physic Garden, one sunny spring day, when the ground around their collection was carpeted in *Cistus* petal confetti.

Spring-flowering woody plants may also re-flower in autumn, particularly after a hot summer. In ancient or diseased plants this is not always a bonus – it can also be their 'swan song' as these seeds are the final generation before their demise.

Repeat flowering can also be achieved through the intervention of a gardener, through pruning, cutting back and deadheading. Depending on the pruning method, group three clematis, such as the

large, white-flowered *C. 'Madame le Coultre'* blooms in spring with a second, less prolific, display in autumn. Cutting back, a technique for herbaceous perennials, can be used to delay flowering or encourage a second (and sometimes third) flush of foliage and flower. However, the greatest overall impact is by deadheading. It is a job for the growing season that should be undertaken every day.

It is a basic instinct of plants to attract pollinators; the ultimate aim being seed production and survival of the species. Disrupt this process by removing fading flowers (deadheading), and the flowering season can be extended by several weeks, with energy going into flower production rather than seed. We deadhead roses without a second thought, yet we rarely apply this to other plants; particularly herbaceous perennials.

The principles are straightforward. If there are new buds or flowers in a cluster, deadhead those that have flowered, to encourage the buds below to flower. When they've finished, remove the main flowering stems at the base. If plants flower on a spike from the base upwards, the timing of removal is a matter of personal preference. You instinctively know when the floral impact diminishes and seedpods become overly dominant.

Cut off the flowering stem at the base of plants such as heucheras once the spikes have finished flowering. The following stems are much the same but secondary flowering is not always as impactful as the first. Lupins and delphiniums, for

To continue turn to page 53 ►

We deadhead roses
without a second
thought, yet we
rarely apply this to
other plants



***Rudbeckia fulgida* var.
sullivantii 'Goldsturm'**

Bright, golden-yellow flowers from July to October. Needs moist soil in sun. Deadhead to encourage flowering, leaving the last flush for winter structure. 60cm x 45cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.



***Geum* 'Prinses Juliana'**

Bright-orange flowers with a red flush, dance above a cushion of mid-green foliage from May to August. Deadhead individually, then break off stems from the base when the last flowers in the cluster have faded. 50cm x 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-7b.



***Hemerocallis* 'Frans Hals'**

Striking orange, red and yellow petals with a gold stripe in each petal. With deadheading it flowers from midsummer until early autumn, but the flowers only last one day – hence its common name of daylily. 1m x 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

Techniques to encourage repeat flowering

• **Chelsea Chop** This produces a succession of flowers, makes growth compact and bushy, and reduces the need for staking. As its name suggests, it's something you should do around the time of the Chelsea Flower Show, from late May to early June. Cut back the stems of herbaceous perennials by a third to a half using shears or secateurs (secateurs are more precise). Flowers are smaller but greater in number and it extends the flowering season. Pruning closer to flowering time increases the delay in flowering, as regrowth takes longer. If you have several clumps of one cultivar, cut each group back to varying degrees. If you only have a single drift then cut those at the front back harder than those at the back. Deadhead to produce more flowers.

• **Hampton Hack** Another technique that takes its name from a flower show. Particularly useful for herbaceous

geraniums, such as *G. sylvaticum*, *G. endressii* and *G. phaeum*, it involves shearing back herbaceous plants to just above ground level, just after flowering. This encourages a flush of new foliage, further flowers and stops self-seeding. It is a useful way to manage *Alchemilla mollis* after flowering and prevent it from becoming a weed. An alternative approach to controlling lady's mantle is to pull off the flowered stems at the base immediately after flowering. Water, if needed after cutting back, and apply a general fertiliser help to promote regrowth.

• **Deadheading** Deadhead roses by cupping your hand around the whole bloom as the flowers fade, to prevent the petals from scattering on the ground. This technique also applies to camellias and peonies. Cut off the individual flowers of cluster-flowered roses as they fade, then prune back the stem

by around 15cm to a strong, healthy leaf once the cluster has finished flowering. Hybrid tea roses should also be removed to a strong outward facing bud. Deadhead rhododendrons with your finger and thumb, carefully snapping off spent flower clusters at the base and taking great care not to damage or break off the soft, new spring growth. Deadhead buddlejas and lilacs by cutting off spent flowerheads with secateurs to a pair of leaves behind the flower to encourage further blooms. Don't remove the spent flowers of plants that produce ornamental fruit, if you want to save seed or if the seeds or fruit are of benefit to wildlife.

• **Further reading** *The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: the Essential Guide to Planting and Pruning Techniques* by Tracy DiSabato-Aust (Timber Press, 2017). A completely revised and expanded version of the definitive work on this subject.



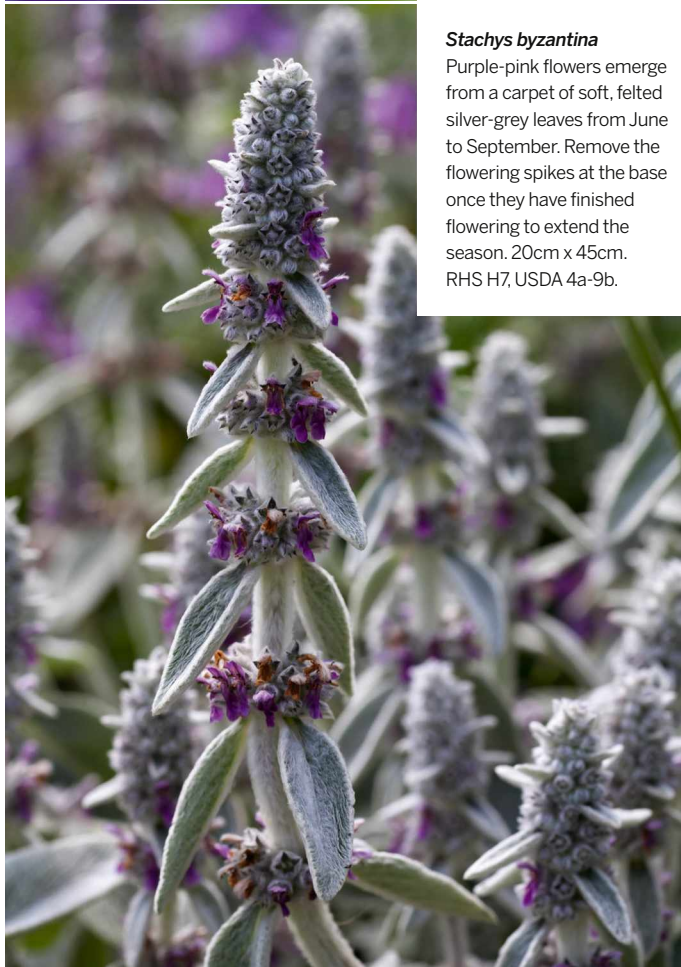
***Geranium himalayense*
'Gravetye'**

Produces rich violet-blue flowers above finely cut foliage from June to August, then spasmodically until autumn if old flowered stems and leaves are removed. 30cm x 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.



***Veronicastrum virginicum*
'Fascination'**

Elegant, slender lilac wands appear from July to September. Deadhead to side buds; cutting back by half in mid to late spring creates more compact plants. 1.8m x 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.



Stachys byzantina

Purple-pink flowers emerge from a carpet of soft, felted silver-grey leaves from June to September. Remove the flowering spikes at the base once they have finished flowering to extend the season. 20cm x 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.



***Phlox paniculata*
'Blue Boy'**

Produces lilac-blue flowers from July to September. Needs well-drained soil in sun or part shade. Cut back individual stems or clumps by half to delay flowering. 60cm x 80cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.



Scabiosa caucasica
'Miss Willmott'

Fabulous milky-white flowers with white centres from June-September. Needs well-drained alkaline soil. Cut off individual flowers and the stem at the base to encourage further blooming. 60cm x 30cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 3a-7b.



Lamium maculatum
'White Nancy'

A spreading groundcover with heart-shaped silvery leaves, which likes deep or part shade. Short spikes of white flowers appear from May to July, and into autumn by removing fading flowerheads. 15cm x 90cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

▷ example, produce smaller secondary flowering spikes. Other plants are cut back, foliage and all, to ground level after the first flowering has finished to encourage fresh foliage and flowers; then there's a pause while regrowth takes place.

Plant breeders are introducing longevity into many groups, sometimes aided by sterile flowers. *Geum* Scarlet Tempest (= 'Macgeu001') has large, double scarlet flowers with an apricot flush and flowers almost continuously from

mid-spring to mid-autumn while with deadheading the compact *Agapanthus* 'Lapis Lazuli' can flower for several months.

Some plants, such as *Coreopsis verticillata* 'Moonbeam', are easy to manage. Use shears, a hedge trimmer or strimmer to cut the stems back to just above the basal foliage as the first flush of flowers finishes in late summer and the regrowth will flower into early autumn. When trimming requires more precision, as with *Penstemon* 'Raven' (the spent flower spikes of which need to be cut back to a strong pair of side shoots lower down on the stem), then garden snips or scissors should be your tool of choice.

Deadheading not only encourages repeat flowering but also controls prolific self-seeders. If *Astrantia* 'Hadsphen Blood' is not cut back after the first flush of flowers to the buds below (and when those have flowered the whole stem cut down to ground level) it can self-seed to distraction. Its relatives are much the same. With dahlias

Deadheading not only encourages repeat flowering but it also controls prolific self-seeders

such as *D.* 'Bishop of Leicester', where flowers are removed by cutting them off at the base of the flowering stem, the rounded buds are yet to flower and the pointed buds are those that have flowered.

In a white border, deadheading needs to be a daily task, as any decay is a blemish on the flowers' beauty. The same is true for daylilies of any kind. Remove individual flowers daily and then the whole flowering stem at the base once flowering has finished. Such small effort

will ensure your flower garden will always look at its best and, as long as you avoid too many sterile flowers, also provide a long-term supply of pollen and nectar for pollinators. What could be better? □

Where to buy

- **Claire Austin Hardy Plants** White Hopton Farm, Wern Lane Sarn, Newtown, Powys SY16 4EN. Tel 01686 670342, claireaustin-hardyplants.co.uk
- **Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants** Priory Lane Nursery, Freefolk Priors, Whitchurch, Hampshire RG28 7FA. Tel 01256 896533, hardysplants.co.uk
- **Marchants Hardy Plants** 2 Marchants Cottages, Mill Lane, Laughton, East Sussex BN8 6AJ. Tel 01323 811737, marchantshardyplants.co.uk
- **Woottens of Wenhamston** The Iris Field, Hall Road, Wenhamston, Suffolk IP19 9HF. Tel 01502 478258, woottensplants.com

JOHN LITTLE

The grass roof and brownfield gardening expert has always gardened with wild abandon and believes a more liberal approach will help build back the nature we so desperately need

WORDS ALYS FOWLER PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

John Little likes the stuff other people disregard: building waste, rubble, old ceramic toilets. He likes rubbish bins, bike stores and railings. He's partial to an old car carcass and a bit of "bad pruning". One thing he's not so keen on is topsoil. This is all coming from a man who makes some of the most inspiring landscapes around, those that are rich in biodiversity, economical to make and maintain, low impact in terms of embodied carbon and pleasing, enriching even, to people.

John has made a business out of growing wild things on waste. He sows wildflower meadows into crushed toilets and sinks that flourish because of the low-nutrient content of such substrates. He creates insect habitats from the sort of rubbish that any building site has – plumbing piping and the ends of roofing felt, mastic tubs and light sockets. There isn't, it seems, any waste that he can't magic into something beautiful and poetic, particularly if you give him a gabion to fill. "I'm slightly obsessive about borders and edges being neat, as it allows you to get away with using all this stuff. Otherwise it's just a pile of rubbish," he explains.

John has loved wild things since he was a child growing up in south Essex. Both his dad and his grandad gardened, but these were more traditional gardens, vegetables and tidy lawns. His grandparents adored him and let him do whatever he wanted in their garden, so he ordered seed and "started chucking it about".

He adds: "I loved gardening from the very beginning, but I never had the patience for seed trays and pricking out, I loved direct sowing." That love has never left him. "I've always been into plants, but I fell into retail, selling shoes like my dad." A small empire of shops later and John had had enough. He sold the shoe business and returned to his first love, plants.

A few of his friends were teachers and this led him to creating some school gardens, outdoor classrooms and eventually green roofs. "The school work has a sort of freedom to it, as you could do stuff there you couldn't do in domestic gardens at the time," he says. "I started to suggest they used crush material as substrates, rubble on the roof, that sort of thing. Recycling was getting big and one thing led to another." He started a business building and supplying green roofs.

"One of the biggest things for me was working on a three-car garage for someone. They had a crushed limestone aggregate driveway and when we went back three years later, all the stuff on the roof had seeded into the driveway," says John. "It was bloody amazing,

so diverse, no maintenance, only the cars driving back and forth to check the growth. It was one of those light-bulb moments. In green roofs you are always dictating the soil type, but this allowed me to see you could do this anywhere."

John might really like wildflowers, but he also loves people. He decided to look after a housing estate in Clapton, east London. He'd done a design and build for the place and the residents association asked if he'd consider the maintenance contract. "We pitched a thing around food and wildflowers and they took a punt on us."

This took John "right back to pure gardening" and to people. "Being the gardener who turns up regularly means you can have a connection with people that you can't have as a designer," he says.

This job gave him a regular income, which meant he could "dip in and out of projects". To date, he's built more than 70 green roofs, tailored spaces for public parks and schools, and created numerous cycle stores, bird hides, and bin shelters. He believes that this stuff "brings horticulture to the eye level. It brings the wildlife and habitats to everyday places."

And what he's learned is that you don't have to give plants topsoil. "If you don't have it, it frees you up because there's absolutely nothing that plants won't grow in. If they're stressed out, they will grow slower, which is better for ecology and also means less maintenance. You start with the right substrate and plants, then the insects

come and after that everything else comes along."

That's John's message from here on. "I'm nearing 60 and I want to share all that I've learned. That not only do insects need a food source, but they need structure, habitats to nest and over winter in, and that some of the best ways to achieve this is with waste materials."

There is a huge interest in John's work today. "It has coincided with a time when I am able to share all of this," he says. He wants to open his garden, where he's experimented with waste substrates and recycled building materials, into a "sort of hub, a place where people can come and go and contribute ideas".

For John the future of our environment has never been more uncertain. "It is a worrying time, but I do believe that with this kind of gardening, we can build the wild back in, using stuff we are chucking out." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about John's work at grassroofcompany.co.uk

INSECTS NEED
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IN BRIEF

What A naturalistic country garden designed to blend with its forest setting.

Where Hampshire.

Size 3,000 square metres within 50 acres of woodland.

Soil Clay.

Climate One of the driest and sunniest areas of southern England.

Hardiness zone USDA 9.

The deck seems to hover above a cloud of *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldtau' and purple moor grass, *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent'. Original plantings of tall *Rudbeckia maxima* are augmented by further rudbeckias grown by owner David Johnston from a free packet of seeds.

OPEN TO NATURE

For an eco-friendly home on the edge of the New Forest, designer Helen Elks-Smith has created an equally spectacular garden that brings nature to the door

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM





As London lawyer David Johnston approached retirement, he decided he needed a project. He had come to know and love the New Forest, so it was here he started looking for a run-down cottage to renovate, where he could make a garden. A muddy 50-acre site housing a spectacularly ugly static caravan was not at all what he had in mind. But surrounding the unkempt goat paddocks was a belt of ancient woodland, loud with birdsong, awash with primroses and bluebells in spring. Woodpeckers nested in the venerable oaks. Kingfishers darted along the stream. David was enchanted, and within a fortnight, the site was his.

A year later, he met Jane, now his partner. “Jane met me and got landed with a burden,” he says apologetically. She does not demur. It took 12 years to surmount the logistical and planning hurdles involved in building their dream home. But today, a pair of super-efficient, eco-friendly, chestnut-clad cubes, joined by a generous oak deck, float on 16 steel piles above the ground, looking out over gently sloping land to a wildlife pond busy with ducks

and dragonflies, and the pristine wild woodland beyond. “We didn’t want the house and garden to dominate the land,” explains David. “We think of them as part of the forest edge.”

Architect Wendy Perring was instructed that on no account should two favourite trees – a wonderfully productive old apple tree, and a magnificent mature *Cornus kousa* – be disturbed. These now provide key views from floor to ceiling windows. Timber finishes (oak, chestnut and ash) reprise the trees that grow in the forest, and even the wall colours are calculated to call the outside in – the exact shades of the bluebells and acid-green euphorbias that light up the woodland in spring. “Once the garden grows up in summer, you really feel like you’re sitting among the plants, even when you’re indoors,” says Jane.

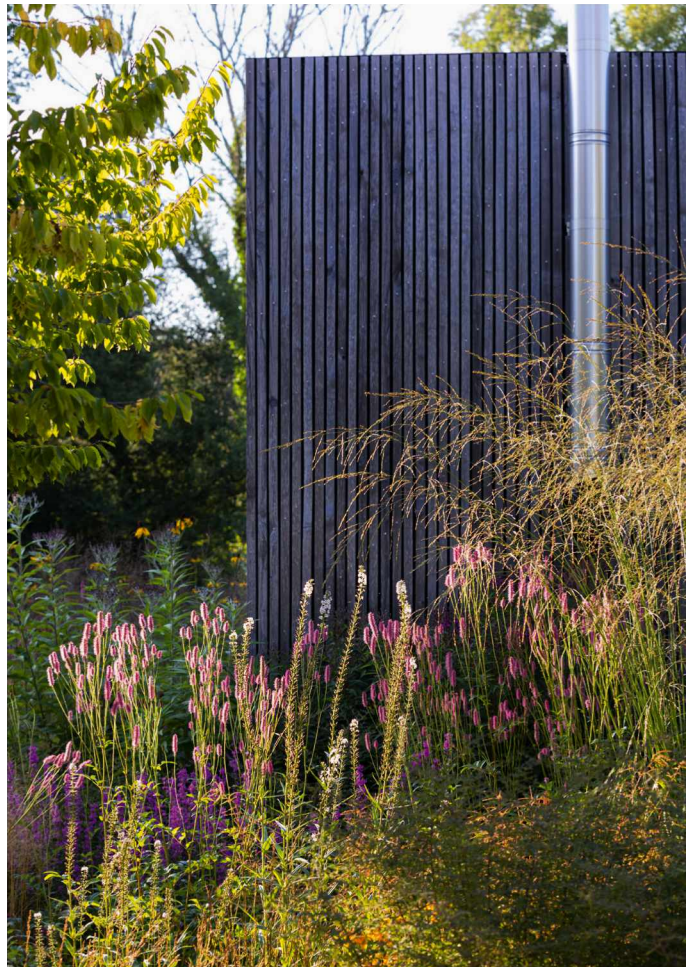
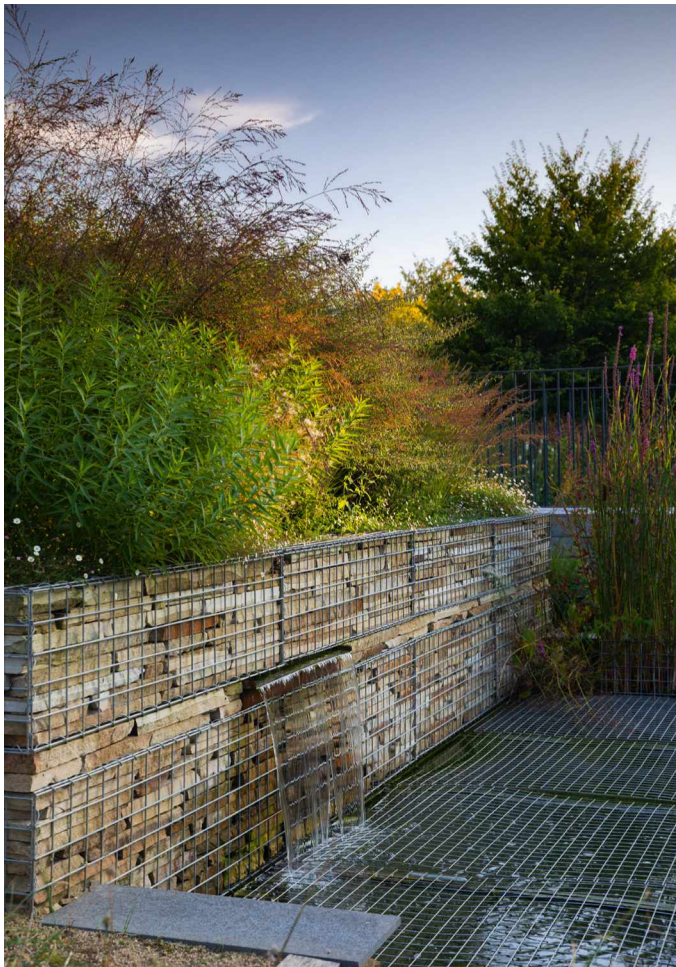
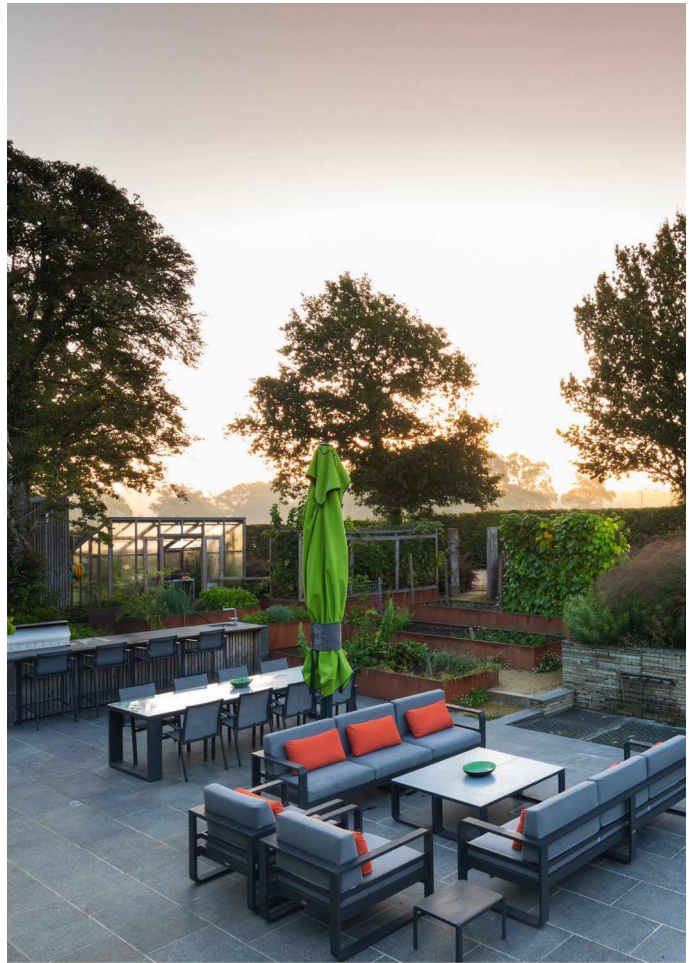
For Helen Elks-Smith, who was brought in to create this garden, the challenge was twofold. She needed to create a scheme that touched gently on the landscape, and successfully integrated the home with its sylvan setting. Within that, she had to create a generous dining terrace and an efficient vegetable garden. So on the entrance side of the house, the lie of the land is cleverly exploited to create the impression of ▷

Above Shadows cast by the hornbeams and tall perennials serve to camouflage walls of weathered chestnut. Perennials here include dark-leaved Michaelmas daisy *Symphyotrichum* ‘Coombe Fishacre’, sanguisorbas and spires of *Lysimachia ephemerum*.

Right The pink flowerheads of *Lythrum virgatum* ‘Dropmore Purple’ and bright yellow of *Rudbeckia maxima* add colour and height to the planting, which rises a good metre above floor level, creating a feeling of being enveloped by plants.

Once the garden grows up in
summer, you feel like you're
sitting among the plants, even
when you're indoors







▷ a sunken garden, enclosed by rising tiers of raised beds edged in Corten steel.

A length of gabion wall has a practical function in retaining the slope, but cleverly doubles as a water feature, discharging a glittering stream from a letterbox chute to a fishpond below. The geometry is precise, echoing that of the sleek modern buildings and sharp-edged pools that flank the walkway leading to the house, but all is softened by the graceful form of the *Cornus kousa* and a broad bed of diaphanous grasses that seem to hover, cloud-like, above the water chute.

To the eastern side of the house, a double row of hornbeams turns an access track running into the woods into a bucolic version of a formal avenue. To the south and west, all formality is forgotten, in a loose, richly textured planting where rudbeckias, sanguisorbas, asters and ironweed combine with grasses selected for their winter form, creating a naturalistic scene that sweeps round the house and flows gently downhill to merge comfortably into ungardened areas of grass and wildflowers skirting the stream and pond.

“All successful gardens are negotiations with their surroundings,” says Helen, “but here it was particularly important to gain a

thorough understanding of the site, and to respect the rhythms of the landscape.” So while the productive garden, enclosed by walls and hedges, could be neat and orderly, the ornamental garden had to “let a breath out”, and defer to the beauty of the forest.

Of course, living in such close proximity to nature has its challenges. New plantings have been disturbed by badgers; the productive raised beds were expressly designed to be rabbit-proof. But the main problem is the forest’s ever-expanding population of deer. “We have quite fantastic deer defences,” says David. “NATO would be proud of them.” And indeed, even with three layers of deer fencing, the odd marauder sneaks through. But on the whole, visitors are welcome.

“When we finished the last section of planting,” says David, “the mallards marched up out of the pond to inspect it. In dry summers, we see foxes creep in to drink from the stream. On sunny days, the garden is full of butterflies, and every morning we open the blinds to see flocks of birds. It is all exactly as we hoped.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Helen’s work at elks-smith.co.uk

Above Helen often employs *Sanguisorba* ‘Joni’ in late summer plantings. With its bobbles of burgundy flowers suspended on tall stems, she finds it a more graceful alternative to popular *Verbena bonariensis*. Here she has combined it with *Anemone* Wild Swan (= ‘Macane001’).

Facing page (clockwise from top left)

David especially likes the purple moor grass, *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* ‘Transparent’ for the way it lives up to its name, here softening the angularity of the kitchen garden and adjacent workshop.

At the heart of the vegetable garden is a space for entertaining with outdoor kitchen, where its plenty can be enjoyed.

Amsonias and vernonias are among the more unusual perennials included in the planting, along with a striking large-flowered burnet, *Sanguisorba* ‘Blackthorn’.

The water chute mirrors the strong horizontals of the gabion wall, while a stout grille protects the fishpond below from marauding herons.

IN BRIEF

What Container-planted roof garden. **Where** Milan, Italy. **Soil** Topsoil in raised beds. **Size** 300 square metres. **Climate** Continental. **Hardiness zone** USDA 9.

This image A small ornamental cherry tree is surrounded by a lush mix of grasses, sedges and herbaceous perennials. Unusually for a children's garden, Cristina has kept the colour palette calm and muted using mainly green and white as here with *Stipa tenuissima* and *Leucanthemum x superbum* 'Starburst', with only *Rudbeckia laciniata* 'Herbstsonne', which forms umbrella-like structures above the heads of the children, providing a burst of yellow.





CHILD'S PLAY

For the roof garden of Clorofilla Kindergarten in central Milan, designer Cristina Mazzucchelli has used a range of wonderfully tactile plants to engage the curiosity of young minds

WORDS LIA LEENDERTZ PHOTOGRAPHS MATTEO CARASSALE / GAP PHOTOS

The Italian phrase for kindergarten, *nido scuola*, translates as 'nest school', which sweetly captures the sense of nurturing and care that a school for children, from babies up to six years old should encompass. It was certainly a phrase that was at the forefront of Cristina Mazzucchelli's mind when she was asked to design a garden for Clorofilla Kindergarten in central Milan, a nursery which, as its name implies, has put nature and an understanding of plants and botany as a central feature.

"The brief was to make a garden where children could freely move and play and where above all they felt safe and were safe," says Cristina. "But also to make it a place where the kids could be stimulated by plants, and where the plants were to be the interface for play and learning." The space is the roof terrace of a building that has been

a nunnery, a theatre and a cinema in previous incarnations, and is surrounded by private apartments on all sides and dominated by a series of arches. "I immediately thought that I wanted to create a green circle that would envelop the children in plants."

To this end Cristina has designed a ring of greenery around the whole garden, and planted up the arches that span the site. "The arches are a major part of the architecture and when I first visited the site they dominated it," says Cristina. "But they also suggested a rhythm. I planted them up with self-clinging *Parthenocissus tricuspidata* 'Veitchii', which will eventually turn them green all over."

The garden was created by a series of raised beds, with pastel-coloured wooden paths between and little steps for the children to sit on. The height of the beds is important for inquisitive little people, and was carefully calculated. "The raised beds prevent the plants from being ▶

Above (from left)

Miscanthus sinensis 'Kleine Silberspinne' is one of many grasses used in the raised beds of the garden. It is placed in the middle of a flower bed where its fluffy appearance gives lightness, movement and a touch of wildness. Throughout, Cristina has used plants that will change with the seasons.

Many of the plants were chosen for their tactile and sensory qualities. At the edges of the beds within easy reach, Cristina planted lamb's ear, *Stachys byzantina*, for its velvety foliage that encourages the children to reach out and touch it, as well as scented Mediterranean plants such as rosemary.

To cover the metal arches that dominate the roof area, Cristina has used self-clinging, small-leaved Virginia creeper, *Parthenocissus tricuspidata* 'Veitchii', which over time will cover the metal adding to the green feel of the space.



Creating privacy screens with raised beds

"Private apartments surround the garden, and the children needed privacy from them, just as the residents needed privacy from the kids," says designer Cristina Mazzucchelli. She created a ring of raised beds all around the outside of the garden, and then filled them with shrubs and small trees, including *Osmanthus*, *Phillyrea*, *Rhaphiolepis*, *Philadelphus*, *Cotinus coggygria* and *Escallonia*. She purposely looked to the Mediterranean, where many of these plants grow on its shallow soils and in very dry conditions, which meant that they would thrive on a shallow depth of soil in the garden's raised beds. "But they are also large shrubs, and so they have been able to create exactly the level of privacy we needed, as well as adding to the sense of a circle of green surrounding the children. At the base of these she has added other smaller plants including sedges, agapanthus and *Stipa tenuissima*. "They all need very little soil to grow in, but adding them in has created the illusion of depth, where in fact the beds are fairly narrow."

I immediately thought that I wanted to create a green circle that would envelop the children in plants



Clockwise from above left

The steps were necessary as a result of a difference in ground level but covering them in wood and surrounding them with planters meant Cristina created multiple small, green, welcoming and protected niches that small children could navigate. The children feel “embraced by plants” when in these areas, she says.

The massed flowering stems of *Calamintha nepeta* ‘Blue Cloud’ provide a joyous scented and sensory experience for those small enough to be enveloped by them.

***Agastache foeniculum* ‘Alabaster’** has liquorice-scented pale flowers that fit in with the delicate pastel-coloured theme. The children can watch the flowers develop, bloom and die down over the course of the year.

▷ trampled by the kids, and they create a depth of soil that we wouldn’t otherwise have. But they also bring the plants up to children’s height.” Into those beds Cristina planted a selection of plants that will draw the children to interact with them.

“Some of the plants are in there for texture: we have *Stachys byzantina*, which feels like velvet. There are also flowers in these beds and scented plants such as rosemary and sage that the children can rub and sniff. And then there are beds of edible plants, which the kids pick and take to the nursery kitchens, and so they teach them how the food they eat grows.”

The teachers at Clorofilla make full use of the plants in the beds, often using them for teaching about how seeds are formed and using the leaves on light tables that illuminate them from below, showing the children the veins. Cristina’s design has created many intimate nooks where children can sit and talk, but it also has a maze-like quality and when their energy is high, the children can zoom safely around the beds.

The atmosphere of the garden and planting though is very green and very calm, a deliberate choice by Cristina. It was important to the brief that it not be planted entirely with evergreens and that it changed through the year. “I have put in lots of flowers, and plants that change with the seasons,” she says. “The children spend lots of time out there and so they are in contact with this reality. It becomes integral.”

However, Cristina was very controlled with her colour palette. “Traditionally, when a garden is made for kids, the colours are very strong – full reds and full pinks,” she says. “When I created this garden I had two young kids of my own, and I had the feeling that kids really don’t need to be over stimulated, so I chose lots of green and pastel-coloured flowers, lots of white, pale blue and some pink. The only bright colour is the rudbeckia, which I put in as a contrast.”

The result is a garden that is educational, interesting, nurturing and beautiful. “Above all else I am always interested in harmony,” says Cristina. “I wanted to create a place where the nursery’s teachers could easily pass on their passion for plants to the children, and I am confident I have done that. But in addition to this the garden is harmonious, tranquil, even poetical, and the kids really enjoy being in it.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Cristina’s work at cristinamazzucchelli.com



IN BRIEF

What A largely formal garden of rooms contrasted with romantic planting.

Where Suffolk.

Size Two thirds of an acre.

Soil Clay improved with topsoil.

Climate Temperate and fairly low rainfall.

Hardiness zone USDA 9a.

Faith in foliage

Soft planting contained within a formal structure of neatly clipped box, bay and yew, has given the garden of this renovated church a new lease of life – and created a perfect sense of harmony between building and plot

WORDS CLARE COULSON PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM



Taking on a derelict building is not for the faint hearted. Let alone a building partially concealed by six metres of brambles and a completely overgrown plot crammed with walnut, maple and oak trees. “There was a willow tree growing out of the back of the building that had caused some problems,” recalls Jenny, who along with her husband John bought the Victorian church in rural Suffolk in 1994 and began work on the garden in 2008. With incredible resourcefulness and John’s apparent ability to design and build almost anything (he was a carpenter before retiring), the couple have transformed this neo-Norman church, and turned its surrounding two thirds of an acre into an immaculate formal garden.

While the house was being renovated and John was restoring the building and making the furniture, there was little time for the garden. But by the time he’d finished he’d figured out the whole plot. “He just appeared one day out of the blue with the entire plan,” says Jenny. Once John had more time the real garden work could begin, and the following winter he and Jenny set ►

Above left The front of the house is punctuated with vast boxes full of John’s precise topiary forms including box balls and spirals and cubes of *Berberis darwinii*. The planters have open bottoms so they don’t dry out too quickly.

Above right The pretty gabled entrance is framed by *Rosa ‘Sombreuil’*, a climbing tea rose introduced in France in 1850 that grows to 4.5m. Its off-white blooms appear almost continuously throughout summer.



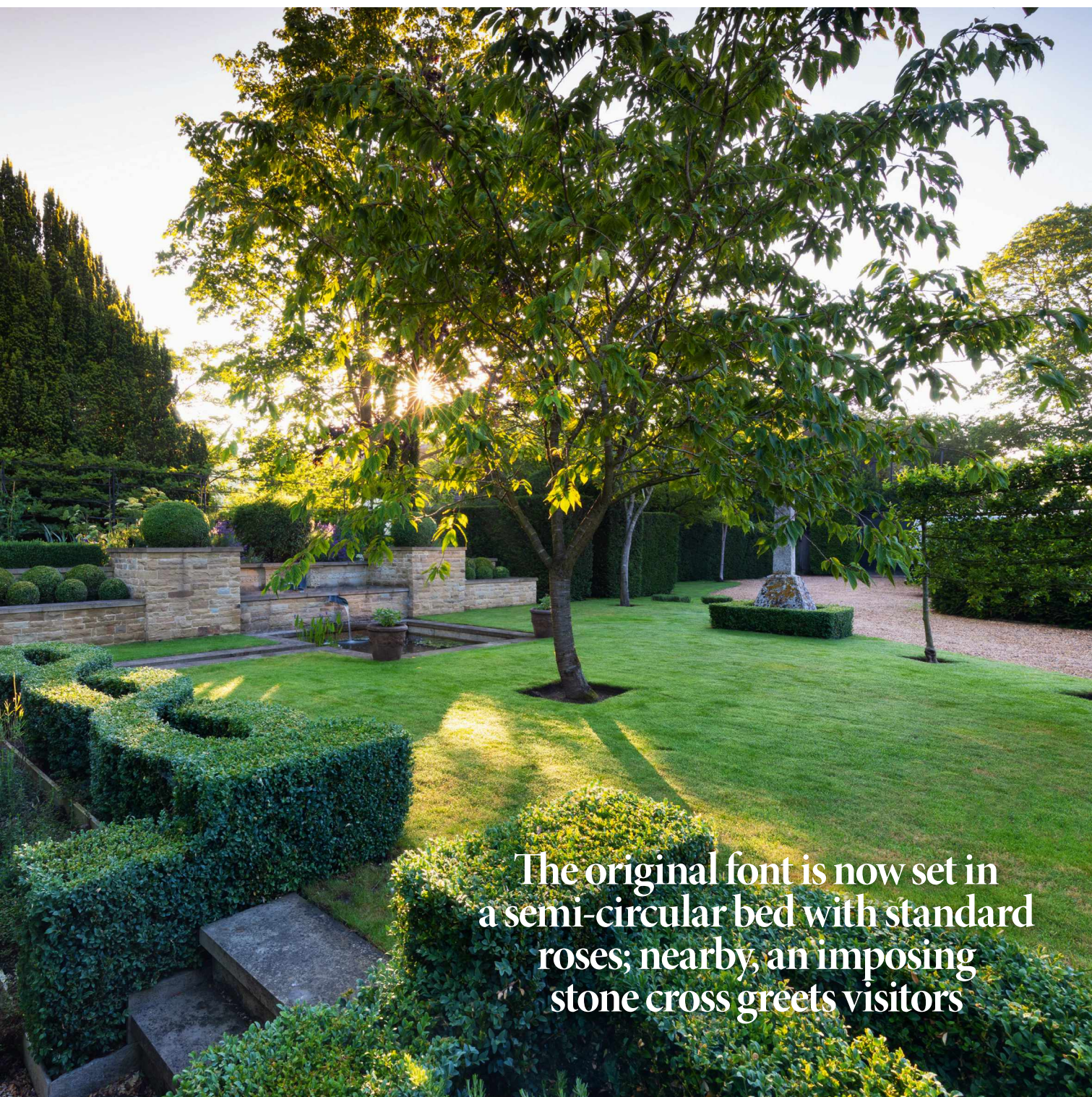
8 key plants from Jenny and John's garden (above)

1 Rosa Tradescant (= 'Ausdir') A repeat-flowering shrub rose, with arching branches, that can also be grown as a short climber up to 2.4m. Its deep-crimson blooms have a strong, old-rose scent and healthy foliage. 1.8m x 1.5m. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b[†].

2 Iris 'Picador' This strong-growing bearded iris was introduced by Benjamin Yoe Morrison in around 1930. Jenny's came from an iris found growing in her grandfather's garden in Kent, which remained unidentified for many years. 1.2m.

3 Sisyrinchium striatum Clump-forming perennial with vertical stems that carry clusters of pale-yellow flowers and fans of lance-shaped leaves. Will re-flower if deadheaded and readily self-seeds. 60cm x 25cm. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

4 Lupinus 'Gallery Blue' In midsummer, deep-indigo spires are held above palmate leaves. It will repeat flower if the spikes are cut back. 50cm x 30cm. RHS H5.



The original font is now set in
a semi-circular bed with standard
roses; nearby, an imposing
stone cross greets visitors

▷ about the groundworks, with excavations turning the garden into a mud bath for several months. Eventually, 200 tonnes of topsoil were brought in to improve the clay.

To the south of the property a series of box parterres leads to an immaculate and large, sunken lawn bordered on two sides with pleached hornbeam allées that were planted as young whips. Clipping is entirely John's domain and he clearly has a knack for extreme precision – he prunes the hornbeams three or four times a year to retain their crisp definition.

To the right, there are double yew hedges that complete the sense of enclosure and are punctuated with towering architectural pillars. Key to the garden's success is this rigorous and beautifully maintained framework that provides year-round structure and colour and is also the perfect foil to the soft planting.

Around the perimeter of the plot is a series of smaller gardens, a summerhouse overlooking a pond, a magnolia garden and a small garden of tree peonies, spring borders and another garden room of box with espalier apples and pears. One of the newest additions is a mini wildflower meadow (sown ▷

Above The entrance to the property echoes the crisp formality of the whole garden. John designed and built the large York-stone water feature. Originally, the plan was to grow edibles but it has been turned over to topiary and perennials.

John has designed almost everything from the pretty glasshouse to the espalier training rods, made by a local blacksmith



Above Across the lawn from John and Jenny's home, a renovated neo-Norman church built in the mid 19th century, is a neat summerhouse overlooking one of three ponds. Like almost everything else in the garden it was designed and built by John.

▷ with Dual Purpose Wildflower Mix from Boston Seeds), surrounded by pleached *Malus x robusta*, which has also been carpeted with *Camassia leichtlinii* subsp. *suksdorfii* Caerulea Group.

Jenny once worked for the Norfolk-based rose specialist Peter Beales and roses feature heavily in the garden. *Rosa* 'Sombreuil', a climbing tea rose, frames the pretty gabled entrance hall. "It's really, really generous and is covered in these lovely, full, off-white flowers," says Jenny. In one large border closer to house a collection of roses includes *R.* 'Cécile Brunner', *R.* 'Reine des Violettes', *R.* Gertrude Jekyll (= 'Ausbord') and *R.* 'Madame Boll' – a favourite here for its endless flowering season and reliable good health. Around them are *Geranium phaeum* and *G. renardii* as well as peonies and *Sisyrinchium striatum*. Behind this border, alongside the sun-baked walls, are beds of bearded iris including the magenta and gold *Iris* 'Picador', which has been in Jenny's family for generations, its identity a mystery for many years.

An Arts and Crafts mood ripples throughout – and chimes perfectly with the Victorian church. Ideas were cherry picked from visits to gardens of that era, such as Hidcote, and details such as the topiary peacocks on top of yew columns are a whimsical nod to the period. But it's the very spirit ▷



8 key plants from Jenny and John's garden continued

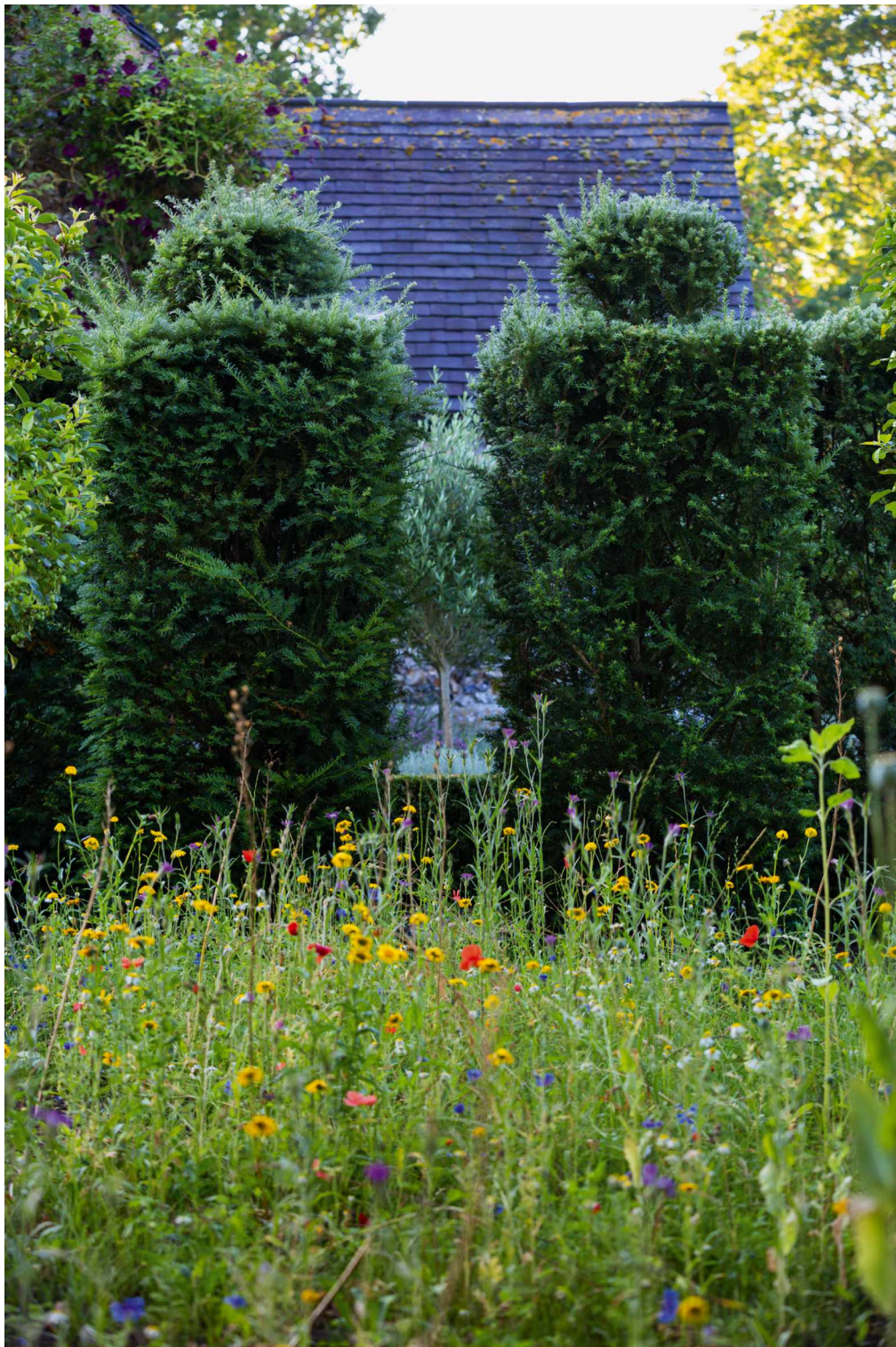
5 *Rosa Wenlock* (= 'Auswen') A repeat-flowering shrub rose or short climber with cupped, fully double, rich-magenta blooms and a strong, old rose fragrance. 1.8m. RHS H4, USDA 5a-10a.

6 *Clematis 'The President'* This free-flowering group two clematis has been popular since its introduction in the 19th century. Its large purple flowers appear from June to September and have pointed petals and red centres. 2.5m x 90cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

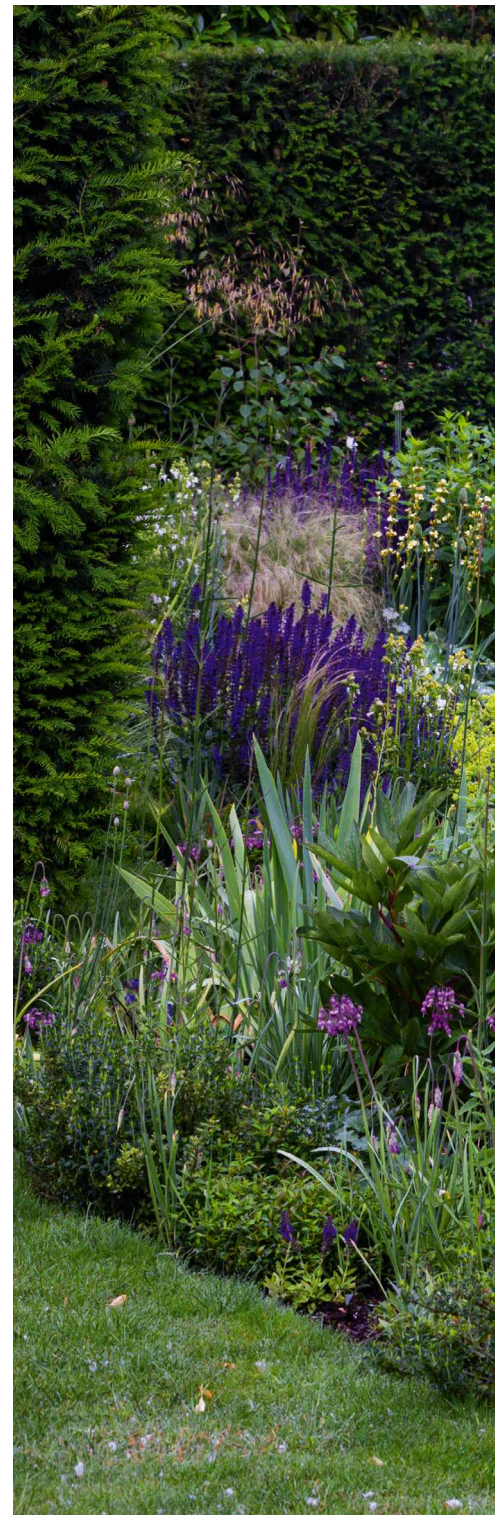
7 *Campanula persicifolia* var. *alba* Breezy spires of delicate, bell-shaped, white flowers appear in midsummer. Will readily self-seed. 90cm x 30cm. USDA 3a-9b

8 *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation' Balls of star-shaped flowers in vivid purple are held on spikes up to 1m tall. If the pretty seedheads are left this will enthusiastically self-seed. 1m x 1m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. *Hardiness ratings given where available.



Above The pretty midsummer meadow, which replaced an area of lawn that didn't thrive, is the newest addition to the garden. It is punctuated with views of the tall yew hedges that surround the main garden.



▷ of the movement that's also felt in the whole fabric of the house and garden. John has designed almost everything from the pretty glasshouse, with its Charles Rennie Mackintosh-inspired glazing details, to the espalier training rods that were made by a local blacksmith.

At the front of the house four enormous planters have been crafted in steel, and then coated in lead sheeting – a simple trick that's far more economical than buying true lead planters. These are filled with a jewel box-like assortment of topiary balls, lollipops and spirals in box and bay around cubes of *Berberis darwinii*. On each side there's an arch in *Pyracantha* 'Teton'. All of which creates a brilliant enclosed area that looks pristine and welcoming all year.

One of the couple's triumphs is to make the garden feel as though it totally belongs to the church – and vice versa. Elements from the church have also been incorporated into the garden – the original font is now set in a small semi-circular bed with standard roses. Nearby, an imposing stone cross, surrounded by a low box hedge, greets visitors to the property. Jenny and John are rightly proud of what they've achieved here – and their achievement is all the more remarkable for having done it all themselves. □

A photograph of a garden featuring a low stone wall. The garden is filled with various plants, including tall purple flowers, yellow flowers, and green foliage. The background shows a dense hedge. The text is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image.

An Arts and Crafts mood
ripples throughout, and details
such as the topiary peacocks
on top of yew columns
are a nod to the period

Using trees

Jenny and John prize crab apple trees for their almost year-round interest, and have used several in different ways throughout the space. Around the meadow they've used pleached *Malus x robusta*, which was originally staked and trained along canes that could be removed once the trees grew, to give a sense of enclosure. Its deep-red buds and blossom are followed by luscious red fruits that are held on the tree through autumn and winter. "The birds leave them until January or February so they bring a lot of colour," says John. *Malus x zumi* 'Golden Hornet', which is used around the house, has white blossom followed by bright-yellow fruits in autumn. In midsummer its lush healthy foliage becomes a verdant feature and echoes the architectural details of the building. It's tied in along metal training bars designed by John. "They are pretty much trouble free. I usually give them a general feed in the spring," says Jenny. "They do need to be trimmed fairly often to keep them neat."

Above Frothy borders, filled with lady's mantle *Alchemilla mollis*, *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' and campanulas among a mix of grasses, including *Stipa gigantea* and *S. tenuissima*, provide the perfect counterpoint to the dark yew hedges.

Go with the flow

In their Oxfordshire garden, Chris and Toby Marchant, consummate planting experts to many a show-winning garden, have used a relaxed mix of plants in a naturalistic style

WORDS ALYS FOWLER PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM





IN BRIEF

What Contemporary garden with an emphasis on natural-style planting.

Where Oxfordshire.

Soil Alluvial silt with green sand pockets in low spots and subjected to prolonged winter flooding.

Size One acre, surrounded by orchard, nuttery, woodland and wildlife refuge.

Climate The house sits in an open frost pocket where winter temperatures quite regularly drop to -10°C.

Hardiness zone USDA 8.

The garden is designed to reflect the wild pastoral landscape beyond its boundaries. Here two large decorative herbaceous borders are the mainstay of the late-summer garden when the likes of *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Riesenschirm', *Eryngium* 'Silver Ghost' and an unnamed *Solidago*, from Piet Oudolf's garden, Hummelo, come to life.

A lush garden scene featuring a variety of plants. In the foreground, there are tall, dark red flowers and white, feathery seed heads. Behind them, a dense green hedge is visible. Above the hedge, there are yellow flowers and purple spikes. In the background, three tall, slender trees with white bark stand against a blue sky with light clouds. The overall scene is vibrant and full of life.

What we love is the process
of gardening, rather than the
end product. We don't actually
want it to be finished



Chris and Toby Marchant's home is a little like something out of a fairy tale. In the middle of the arable flatlands of Oxfordshire this delightful timber-framed house sits nestled among trees and surrounded by a garden that weaves and unfolds in surprising ways.

To this sudden burst of colour and life, all manner of wildlife comes. Song birds warble, butterflies flit; a resident kite mews from high in a tree, grass snakes bask in the compost and swim in the pond next to a moorhen, while a duck is happily sitting on her nest in the rosemary bush and deer pad around the perimeter. There is a limit to the wildlife Chris and Toby are prepared to let in. Deer and rabbits are fenced out – “Their idea of sharing and ours was rather different,” says Chris – but nonetheless the couple's decidedly relaxed attitude does make you feel like you've stumbled on Snow White's cottage.

The garden is confined to an acre surrounding the house, and at various points Chris and Toby were able to purchase

surrounding fields so that their views are nestled into a wilder landscape. To these fields they have added an orchard and nuttery, a native woodland and a larger field with pollarded willows and a wildflower meadows, so that the wider view is of a simple pastoral landscape of yesteryear.

Chris and Toby know a thing or two about plants, for more than 30 years they ran Orchard Dene Nurseries, and as growers they were famed for their flawless production values. Their plants could be found growing in countless award-winning RHS Chelsea Flower Show gardens and the nursery was loved by every garden designer you can think of. Knowing how impeccably the nursery was run, I was a little taken aback at how effortlessly laid back the garden is, gently tamed within its wild exteriors. “We actually just want to enjoy it all and garden,” says Chris. “What we love is the process of gardening, rather than the end product. We don't actually want it to be finished.”

Such graceful planting is a result of decades of knowledge and deep understanding of how plant communities

To continue turn to page 80 ►

A hornbeam hedge provides a sculptural backdrop, framing a loose mix of planting that includes the greenish flat seedheads of *Patrinia mohandria*, which contrast with the spikier red flowers of *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Firetail'.



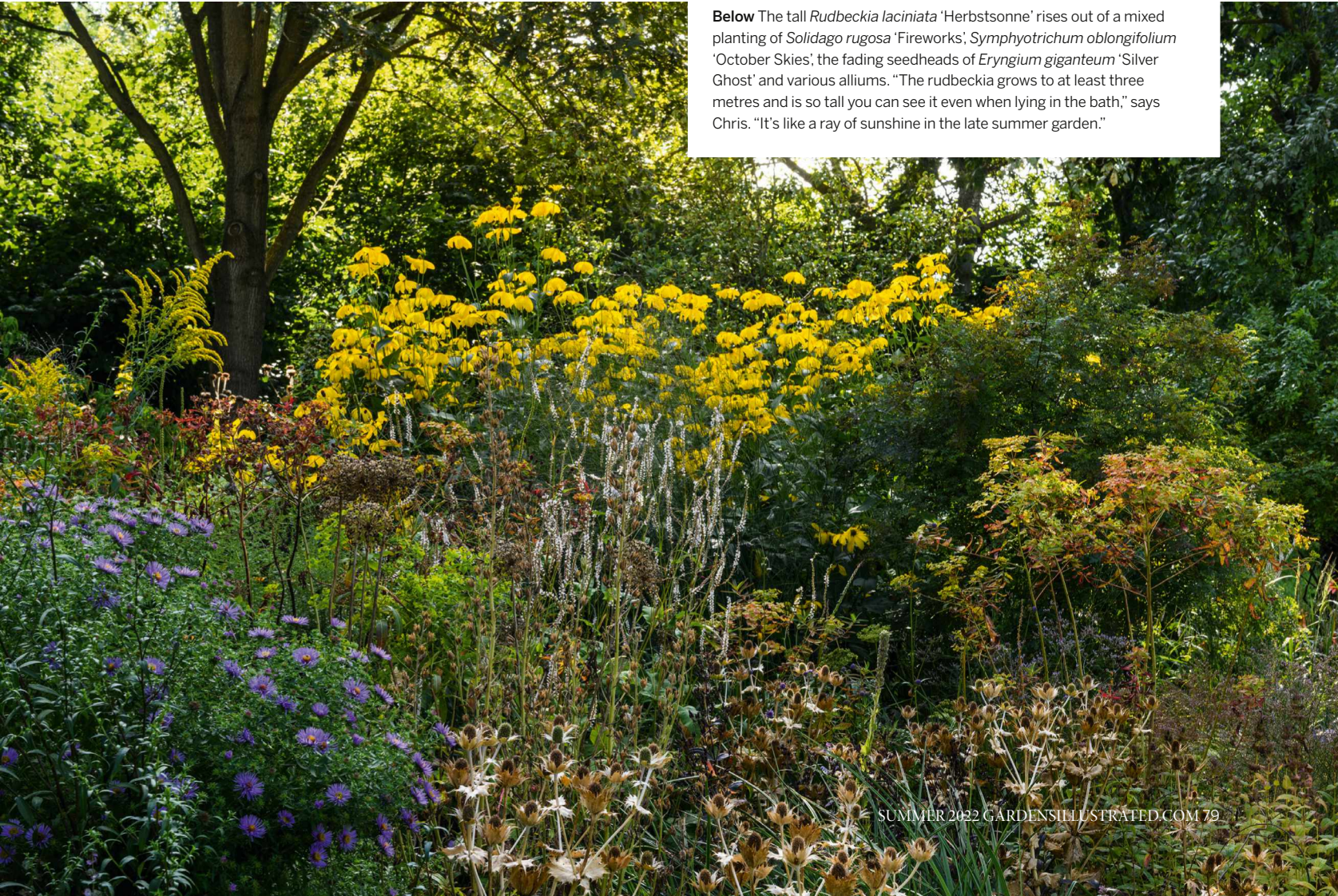
Above When Chris and Toby bought the garden 27 years ago it was a largely an ungardened space, but it did come with large, mostly native trees planted by the previous owners. These provide the necessary shelter to this fairly exposed site. By summer the garden has a wide range of colour, often seen through a veil of upright grasses, including *Sesleria autumnalis*, with taller emergent plants, such as *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Alba'.



Below Many tall plants, including eupatoriums, echinops, veronicastrums and sanguisorbas, emerge from a tapestry of foliage, yet there's very little apparent staking. "We prefer to install hazel structures early in spring to create a natural corsetry to plants that might need it," explains Chris. "This allows for important movement later in the season as taller, agile plants ascend above the twigs and are allowed to flex in the breeze."



Above Grasses and the lush foliage of *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Elegans', *Aruncus dioicus* 'Zweiweltenkind' and *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'JS Caliente' create a relaxed shady border. "There are extensive areas where herbaceous plants and grasses dominate with the occasional formal touches in the form of hedges and topiary structures. These are designed to provide a backdrop to certain zones of planting and give shelter to wind prone areas," says Toby.



Below The tall *Rudbeckia laciniata* 'Herbstsonne' rises out of a mixed planting of *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks', *Symphyotrichum oblongifolium* 'October Skies', the fading seedheads of *Eryngium giganteum* 'Silver Ghost' and various alliums. "The rudbeckia grows to at least three metres and is so tall you can see it even when lying in the bath," says Chris. "It's like a ray of sunshine in the late summer garden."



We'll mow a crisp strip
alongside an edge rather like
framing a picture. It adds an
immediate definition

A central grass path, leading to the wilder parts of the garden, divides the two wide borders separating drifts of the feathery grass *Calamagrostis brachytricha*, the purple aster *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* 'October Skies' and tall, yellow *Rudbeckia laciniata* 'Herbstsonne' from the buff seedheads of *Eryngium giganteum* 'Silver Ghost'.

▷ interact. The garden is made up of a series of matrices. “We use a predominance of two or three things that are reliable and then punctuate these with other plants that either emerge or contrast,” says Chris. These matrices are designed to cover the ground naturally and keep the soil in good health, reducing the need for unnecessary intervention and to keep down weeding.

From an understorey of low sedges and grasses, including *Carex digitata*, *Carex morrowii* 'Irish Green', *Melica altissima* 'Alba' and *Sesleria autumnalis*, rise taller plants, such as amsonias, actaeas, kalimeris and thalictrums. Essentially, plants are allowed to co-exist naturally, but as Chris explains nothing is left in one place for ever, everything is allowed to move. “Sometimes we have to edit because some things are self-seeding a little too much,” she says. “*Geranium nodosum* likes to come up in the middle of clumps of other plants.”

The garden is subject to a very high water table and one half is prone to winter flooding. Rather than try and alleviate this, Chris and Toby embrace the garden's ability to “disappear under water” for three to four months in winter and occasionally in spring and summer. Starting from a natural vernal pond, a grass path turns into a channel of water flowing down into a second pond. “We had to experiment to find plants that are happy with sitting under three months of water,” says Chris. “We've gained considerable experience on what will and will not tolerate these erratic conditions.” In the seasonal pond this means a spring flurry of cowslips and fritillaries; in the flood zone, plants such as *Iris sibirica*, *Lobelia x speciosa* 'Vedrariensis' and *Euphorbia palustris*, and ferns including *Osmunda* and *Matteuccia*.

While the left side floods, the right side bakes. Here the heavier, fertile alluvial silt is liable to become sticky in winter, and shrinks and cracks in summer. Choice planting and a yearly application of

mulches and compost have helped to retain moisture in summer. The central garden is the sunniest part and has a large round lawn, although Chris admits that it's more a tapestry of green species and they use varying mowing regimes to create longer-grassed areas.

Around this sit two wide borders dedicated to decorative herbaceous planting with a central grass path that snakes away to the wilder reaches. “These borders are the mainstay of the late-summer garden with a wider range of colours, often seen through a veil of grasses,” says Chris. Plants include *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Album', *Vernonia arkansana*, *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Riesenschirm', *Clematis* 'Mrs Robert Brydon' and *Strobilanthes atropurpurea*. By autumn the garden begins to mellow into a golden haze of coppers and oranges, punctuated here and there with violet hues. There's a smattering of annuals and biennials, such as *Patrinia monandra*, *Orlaya grandiflora*, *Digitalis ferruginea* and *Delphinium requienii*, used for seasonal variance. “These are useful for filling gaps in early year plantings or when the borders are reorganised,” explains Toby.

Neither Chris nor Toby were very keen to use too much hard landscaping in the garden. Instead structure comes from a careful use of paths and sculpturally cut hedges – mainly box and undulating hornbeam – which says Toby gives shape and framing for the looser planting. “We'll mow a crisp strip alongside an edge rather like framing a picture,” says Chris. “It adds an immediate definition and holds the loose internal planting. Sometimes that's all that's needed to lift a space.”

The result is a garden that is as peaceful as it is playful, that embraces its wild edges and inhabitants to create a space of ecological wealth with some spectacular plant selections. Just as you might expect from two of horticulture's finest plantspeople. □



8 KEY PLANTS

1 *Symphyotrichum* 'Prairie Purple' A lovely, tall aster that produces masses of starry purple-blue flowers over a very long flowering season, from late summer to late autumn. 1m x 70cm. RHS H7[†].

2 *Calamagrostis brachytricha* The useful Korean feather grass thrives in both sun and part shade with tall, fluffy, silver-grey flowerheads that emerge out of fountains of grey-green foliage. 1.5m x 50cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

3 *Sanguisorba officinalis* 'Red Thunder' Forms attractive clumps of feathery foliage from which slender, arching stems are topped with claret red flower spikes that sway in the breeze. 1.2m x 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

4 *Eryngium giganteum* 'Silver Ghost' A perennial loved for its flower spikes, surrounded by a ruff of silver-white bracts, that turn steely blue as they mature and fade to attractive seedheads. 60cm x 40cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.

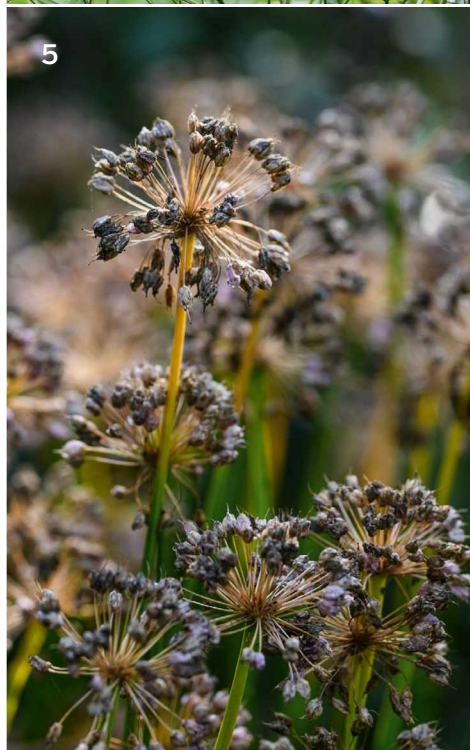
5 *Allium* 'Summer Beauty' A lilac-pink allium with flat, glossy green leaves that form a tight clump. The drumstick flowerheads emerge from the foliage from June through to August and are loved by pollinators. These are then followed by persistent seedheads. 40cm x 35cm. RHS H6.

6 *Asclepias curassavica* A tender, evergreen sub-shrub that is largely grown in the UK as an annual. It flowers freely from midsummer onwards, and the flowers are a true butterfly magnet. 70cm x 30cm. RHS H1C, USDA 9a-11.

7 *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Riesenschirm' Provides huge, soft flowerheads full of tiny pink flowers on deeper purple stems, so that the whole effect is of a purple-pink umbrella on top of green leaves. 2m x 2m. AGM. RHS H7.

8 *Solidago* This unnamed form was given to Chris and Toby by the Dutch designer Piet Oudolf from his garden Hummelo. Solidagos flower from late summer onwards and are extremely attractive to pollinators. 1m x 50cm.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†]Hardiness ratings given where available.



PERFECTLY FORMED

York Gate in Leeds may be relatively small, but this historic, late 20th-century family garden is one of horticulture's brightest gems

WORDS JACK WALLINGTON PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM





IN BRIEF

What Arts and Crafts garden.

Where Leeds.

Size Around four acres in total, including original one-acre garden and additional meadow.

Soil Sandy but improved.

Climate Temperate.

Hardiness zone USDA 8.

Between 1951 and 1994, the Spencer family created a masterpiece of pattern from paths to topiary hedges, which allows for a timeless structure that frames innovative new planting ideas today. The striking row of six yew sails is visible from all areas of the garden.



Walking around York Gate on the northern outskirts of Leeds, it's easy to forget the main part of this garden is only an acre in total. Broken into a series of enclosed garden spaces, each different from the last and brimming with beautiful plant combinations, its size makes it one of the UK's most inspirational gardens for relatable, take-home ideas.

The garden was originally created by two amateur gardeners, Frederick and Sybil Spencer, who bought the house and surrounding farmland in 1951. Both Frederick and Sybil – and their son Robin who was responsible for much of the garden's design from his father's death in the early 1960s to his own in the 1980s – loved the Arts and Crafts style of gardens such as Hidcote. At York Gate they aimed to translate that style to suit their smaller plot, dividing it into a series of stylised zones that include a miniature pinetum, a fern dell and a tropical garden. Around each corner is a different themed area like a series of tiny show gardens.

After Sybil's death in 1994 this remarkable garden was gifted to the horticultural charity

Perennial, which has maintained it in sympathy with the Spencers' design, but over the past few years has made some exciting changes. One has been to buy back land the Spencers had sold to raise funds for their ambitious garden plans in the 1950s. Another has been the appointment of talented head gardener Ben Preston, who joined the team five years ago. "I arrived at a time of transition with the garden moving into a new phase when Perennial bought the property next door," says Ben. "It meant we could have a car park, a proper café, have better access to the meadow and add a new nursery to grow our own plants."

As well as allowing Ben and his team the chance to offer plants for sale to York Gate's annual 17,000 visitors, this new nursery also enables them to propagate much of what they need for the garden. Currently, a third of plants are grown on site, with plans to increase this to around 90 per cent, further reducing the garden's environmental impact.

As part of the new vision for York Gate, Ben has also introduced a plan for the previously unmanaged paddock. A traditional productive hay meadow, it provides fodder for horses and cattle to a local farm and beekeepers also use part of it. "Within the existing seed bank there were orchids and we're also trying a few more unusual things," says Ben, who has added *Tulipa sylvestris* and

Above Stone setts in gravel surround a reclaimed millstone in a satisfying labyrinthine pattern, helping to accentuate the shapes and textures of the planting, which includes yew buns and the striking silhouette of a lolling *Sequoiadendron giganteum* 'Pendulum'.

Right above The carpet path, designed by Robin Spencer in 1981, leads the eye to a small gazebo at the heart of the garden. Rather than add clutter, the path's diamond pattern helps bring a sense of calm to frame the exuberant main borders.

Right below Keeping the Spencers' legacy of trying exciting new plant combinations, the small tropical garden is filled with tree ferns, scheffleras, hostas, fuchsias and other leafy exotics.

To continue turn to page 88 ►



You can walk around this
garden 50 times and always
see something new, see
something very special

A photograph of a garden border at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, orange and pink clouds. In the foreground, there are large, silvery-green leaves of *Astelia chathamica* and clusters of small white flowers. Behind them, a dense wall of green foliage is topped with large, billowing clouds of white flowers from *Persicaria x fennica* 'Johanniswolke'. To the right, a gravel path with circular stepping stones leads away from the viewer. In the background, a large, dark, weeping tree is visible against the sunset sky.

Dominating the white garden are the silvery spikes of *Astelia chathamica* and two billowing clouds of *Persicaria x fennica* 'Johanniswolke' alongside a mix of fresh-green foliage and a host of other white-flowered plants, including foxgloves, astrantias, sanguisorbas and veronicastrums.



Reclaimed materials

The Spencers were savvy about the materials they used in their garden. Whether they were keen on a bargain or enjoyed the history of where objects had been before, many elements of the garden were recycled. "The garden is full of grind and millstones reclaimed from the old mills around Yorkshire," says head gardener Ben Preston. "Both Frederick and Robin were surveyors and collected these on their working travels." Functionally, they're placed at junctions for people to pause at, and as focal points to draw them further into the garden. All of the slate from the house's roof was once replaced and then used throughout the garden, set on edge in circles to add texture, pattern and detail to the hard landscaping, as well as on the Lutyens-inspired steps. Many hard-landscaped areas have such details, adding a solidity as well as an artfulness to elements ordinarily ignored, such as paths. Perhaps the garden's smaller size has encouraged such creativity because there is less material and labour required to create them. Pattern is one of garden design's least discussed elements and yet it's one of the most critical for bringing the many parts of a garden together into something cohesive. At York Gate, pattern has been ingeniously used to unify the garden in both the core landscaping and topiarised plants.



▷ *Fritillaria acmopetala* to existing plantings of *Fritillaria meleagris* and camassias.

For Ben, what makes York Gate so clever is that it works brilliantly on a smaller level. “It’s not like Stowe or Chatsworth,” he says. “It’s relatable to an average gardener, broken into 14 areas filled with ideas that people can replicate. All the different elements are quite complex overall, but when you break it down it’s feasible at home.”

Much of the genius of York Gate is in its combination of experimental planting and well-executed permanent structure. This includes yew and beech hedging as well as creative upcycled landscaping features, such as decorative paths and patios. The Spencers were always keen to try new plants and this spirit has been continued by Ben, along with senior gardener Jack Ogg and a team of talented garden volunteers.

The best public gardens are alive with ideas and at York Gate the best ideas from the past merge with those of the present. York Gate’s philosophy is to maintain the backbone of the Spencers’ legacy – the topiary and structure that make the garden – but to push horticulture forward in the lower and softer layers with exciting perennials and annuals. “Sybil noted down every single plant she bought,” says Ben. “So we can select modern varieties of plants that they bought. The Spencers were planting arisaemas in the 1960s and 1970s,

plants not everyone was growing then, and we’re continuing to do that now.”

Topiary forms key focal points throughout the garden with a row of remarkable yew sails near the house and the famous espaliered cedar and pyracanthas. Around all of this, the team is trialling contemporary combinations, including scheffleras and exotics in the jungle garden, various colourful asters, succulents, persicarias, lilies and dahlias.

“It’s a multi-layered garden held together by the structure,” says Ben. He and his team are adding to these layers with annuals joining the thalictrums, delphiniums and peonies in the white garden, and the blue flowers of meconopsis seen among the ferns and polygonatum in the dell.

“I love the detail,” says Ben. “From tiny pockets with unusual erythroniums, to the hard landscaping next to other really unusual plants. You can walk around this garden 50 times and always see something new, see something very special.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address York Gate, Back Church Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS16 8DW. **Tel** 0113 267 8240.

Web perennial.org.uk/garden/york-gate-garden

Open 1 April – 30 October 2022, Wednesday – Sunday, 10am-4.30pm. Admission £7.

See page 93 for news of Perennial’s fourth garden.

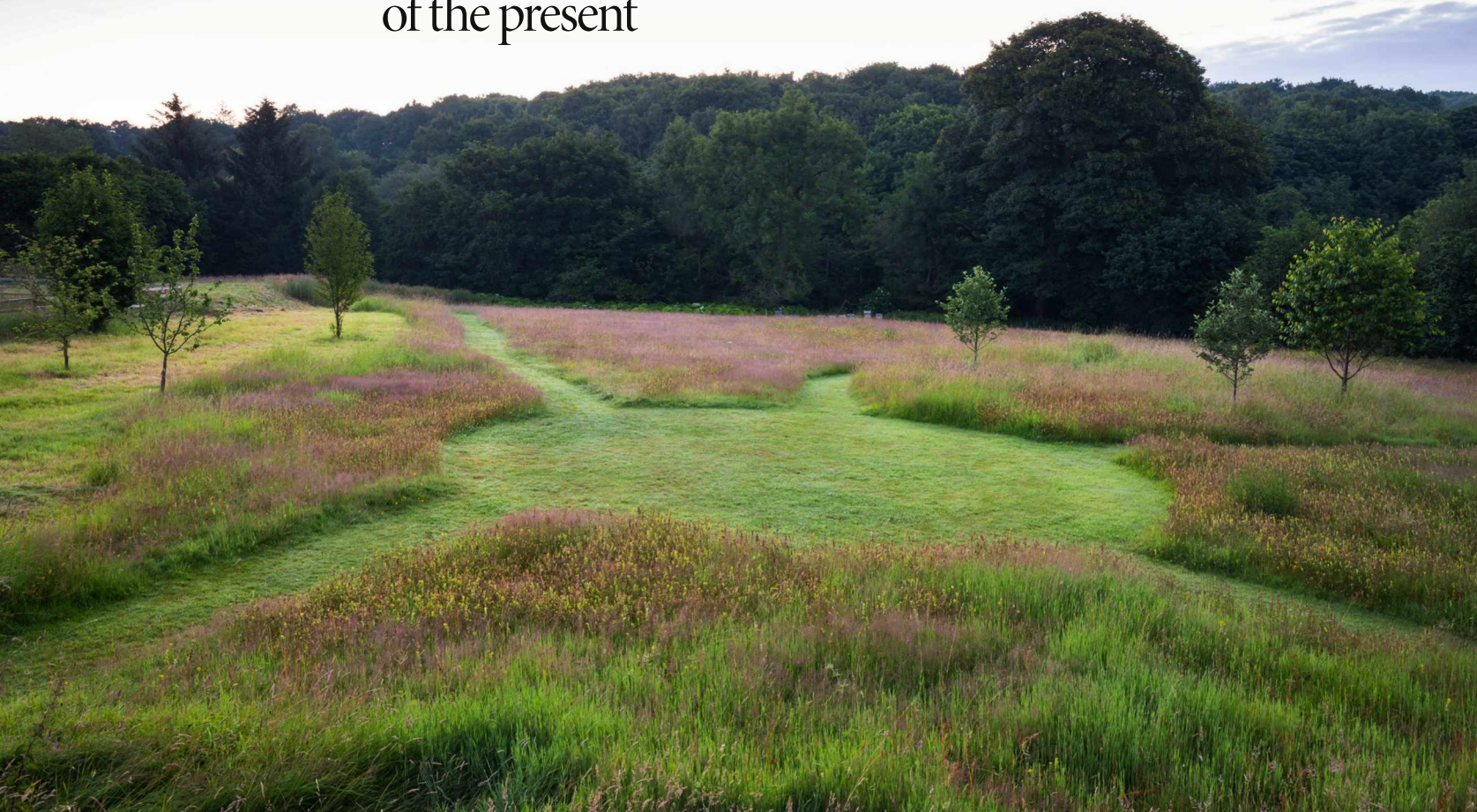
Above Spiral topiary and alliums set off the beautiful herb garden, filled with a range of edibles, including fennel, chives and origanum, many propagated by head gardener Ben and his team of volunteers.

Right above A lean-to greenhouse and stone terrace are the perfect habitat for the tiny jewel-like alpinas and succulents. Tender plants are tucked away into the greenhouse for the winter.

Right below The meadow is used as a productive hay meadow supplying local farmers with feed for livestock. Throughout spring and summer it is awash with orchids, fritillaries and a host of other local wildflowers – all supporting a large population of wildlife.



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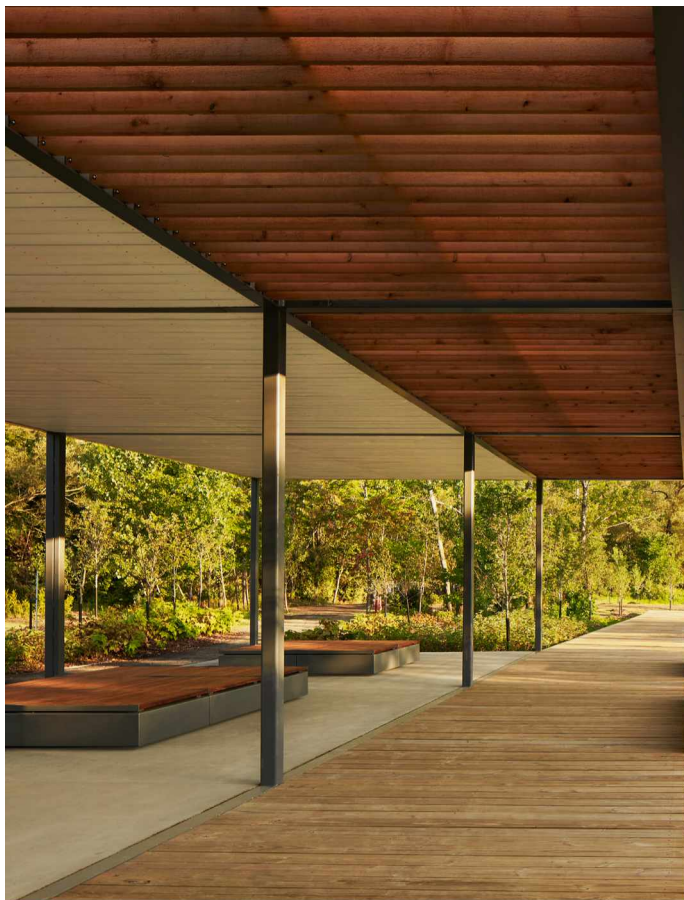
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Design

News, designer stays and sourcebook



FRESH EXPERIENCE

A pavilion and walkway by architects Daoust Lestage Lizotte + Stecker has been awarded the Grand Prix d'excellence at the 2022 awards of the Ordre des architectes du Québec. The Experience Chute at Parc de la Chute-Montmorency, near Québec, allows visitors to approach the park's 83m-high waterfall in a four-segment tour around the river basin. On the western shore an open-sided pavilion extends towards the water to form a slatted pergola, while alongside this a boardwalk hovers on stilts, minimising its impact on the environment. The forest surrounding the structure has been enhanced with new plantings of native trees and shrubs. daoustlestage.com



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News

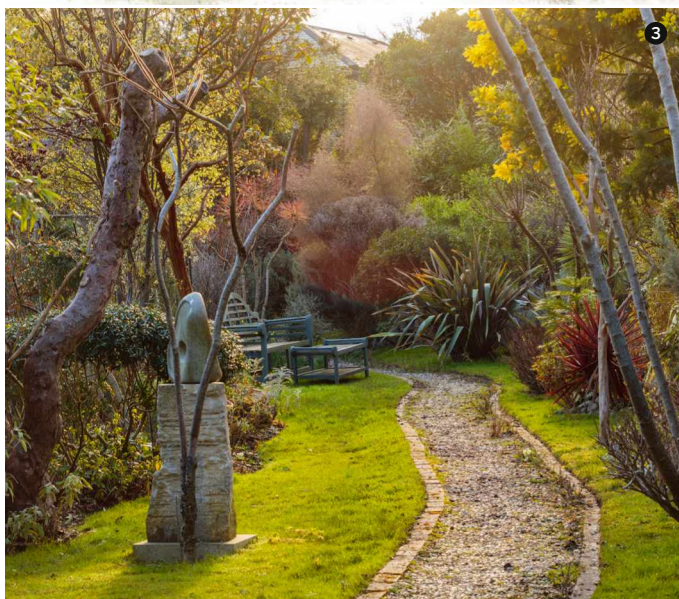
COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



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① HOSPITAL GARDEN

A ground-floor courtyard garden, designed by Rae Wilkinson has been installed at St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey Surrey. Screened by pleached hornbeams, the garden has a tranquil feel thanks to the calming sound of brimming water from a terracotta water feature and a predominantly green-and-white planting scheme that includes *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle', *Astilbe* 'Weisse Gloria' and *Hebe salicifolia*. Vertical interest comes from multi-stemmed *Acer palmatum* and *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, while a garden room with a green roof allows the space to be used year round. raewilkinson.com

② TREEHOUSE AWARD

Drovers' Bough, a long, narrow, wooden building in Herefordshire by design studio Akin, has won the *Architects' Journal's* Small Project Award. Raised 2m off the ground on green oak stilts, the compact residence sits alongside an old drovers' path and enjoys views to the Black Mountains from its double-height living space. Self-built, mainly of locally sourced larch and oak by Mark Hamilton Furniture, and powered by a grid of solar panels, it is accessed via a long staircase leading from the path into the tree canopies. Two east-west facing windows fold back to allow the owners to touch the trees. akinstudio.co.uk

③ PERENNIAL'S FOURTH GARDEN

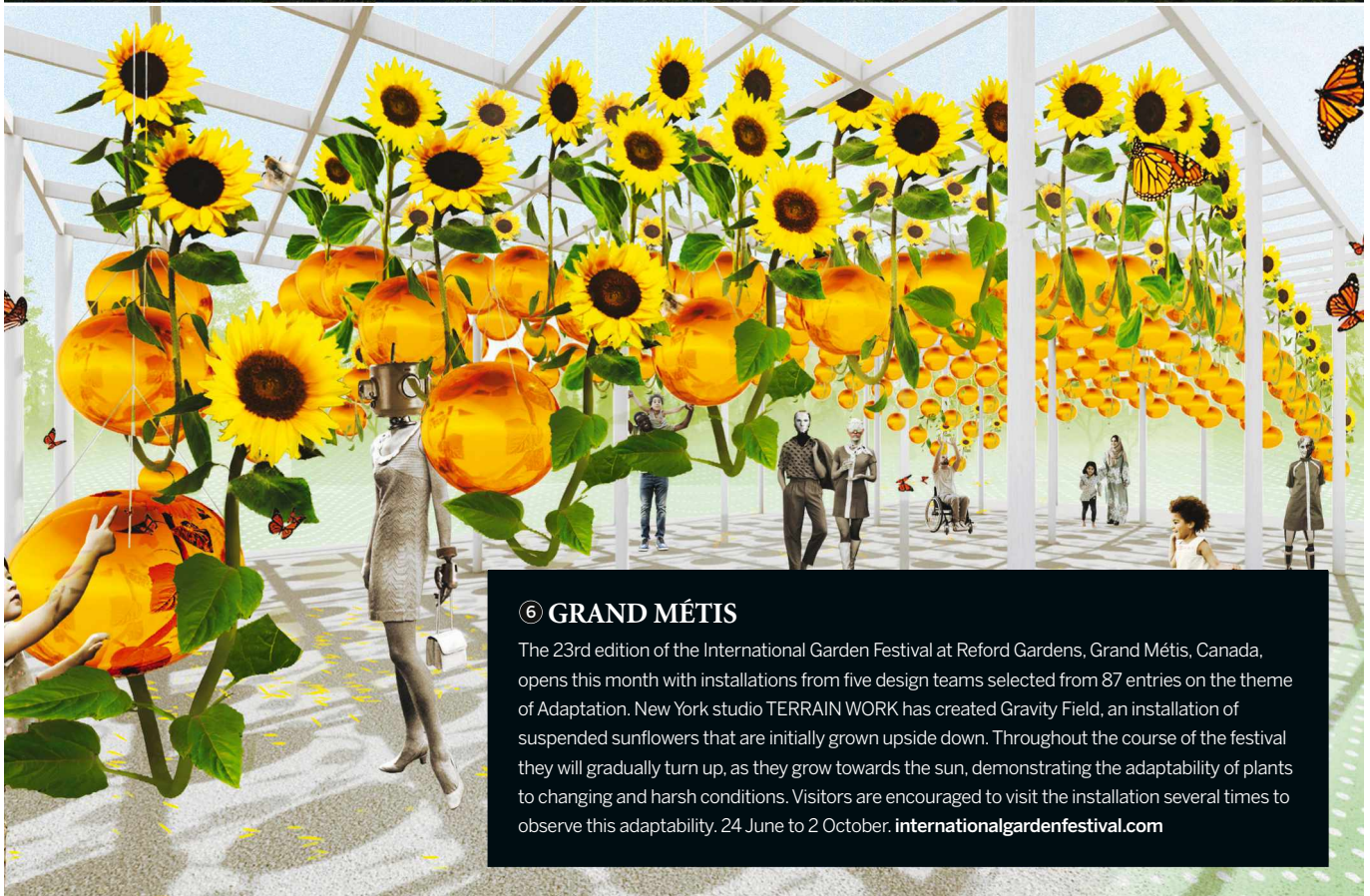
An award-winning garden in north London is set to become horticultural charity Perennial's fourth garden. Mona Abboud, who holds a National Plant Collection of *Corokia*, is to gift her garden to the charity in her will. A former opera singer, Mona started to develop her long, narrow garden in 2000, gradually filling it with a collection of unusual Mediterranean and Australasian plants, and in recent years South African restios. Her garden will show visitors just what can be achieved in a suburban environment. monasgarden.co.uk; perennial.org.uk

④ PERFORMANCE ART

NOOMA Studio has won a competition for a creative public-realm installation, organised by the London Festival of Architecture and London Borough of Camden. The winning scheme – The Phoenix Road Performing Gardens – proposes a street garden performance space in Somers Town, London, that has the concept of borrowing at its heart. Each of the performance spaces will be enclosed by a pocket garden configured from barrels filled with borrowed plants. The gardens will launch with a weekend programme of events on 25-26 June, and stay in place until 18 July. londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

⑤ PARK ON THE ROOF

Japanese architectural studio Sou Fujimoto Architects has revealed a concept design for a circular community centre with a bowl-shaped, planted roof in the Japanese city of Hida. The planted roof, which will be supported on slender white columns alongside the railway station, and dip down to ground level at the building's oval-shaped central plaza, is conceived as a park criss-crossed by paths that are inspired by Hida's traditional townscapes. Numerous openings in the roof will provide natural light for the building's various units that include a research centre, student accommodation, shops and an all-weather playing field. sou-fujimoto.net

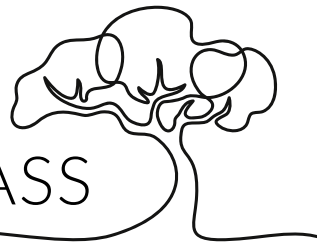


⑥ GRAND MÉTIS

The 23rd edition of the International Garden Festival at Reford Gardens, Grand Métis, Canada, opens this month with installations from five design teams selected from 87 entries on the theme of Adaptation. New York studio TERRAIN WORK has created Gravity Field, an installation of suspended sunflowers that are initially grown upside down. Throughout the course of the festival they will gradually turn up, as they grow towards the sun, demonstrating the adaptability of plants to changing and harsh conditions. Visitors are encouraged to visit the installation several times to observe this adaptability. 24 June to 2 October. internationalgardenfestival.com

5 SFA; 6 THEODORE HOERR, KELLY WATERS, REBECCA SHEN

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Photo: R Alexander

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Hailstone Barn.

Hailstone Barn

**Cherington, Gloucestershire,
designed by James Alexander-Sinclair**

The gravel garden surrounding this barn conversion rental property that sleeps six, close to the Cotswold town of Tetbury, was landscaped by James Alexander-Sinclair, and is designed to complement and enhance the agricultural land that spreads away from it. Once filled with cattle, then weeds, the old farmyard is now a hazily romantic place in which to find a lounger and hide away within the cocooning meadow-style planting that culminates during summer with *Sisyrinchium striatum* and lupins blurring with *Anemathele lessoniana*, euphorbias and *Phlomis russeliana*.
Tel 01386 896383, ruralretreats.co.uk

Thyme

**Southrop, Gloucestershire,
designed by Bunny Guinness**

At the expansive Thyme in the Cotswolds, Bunny Guinness helped owner Caryn Hibbert fulfil her vision with a series of classic country-house gardens that weave their way around the 17th-century barns, houses and cottages, all with unique bookable rooms, and feature cottage planting, including thyme, lavender and persicarias. Working gardens and orchards supply flowers for the house, fruit and vegetables for the kitchen, and herbs for the spa. In addition to Bunny's gardens is a 40-acre water meadow, that is a site of special scientific interest, displaying a rich tapestry of wild grasses and flowers.
Tel 01367 850174, thyme.co.uk

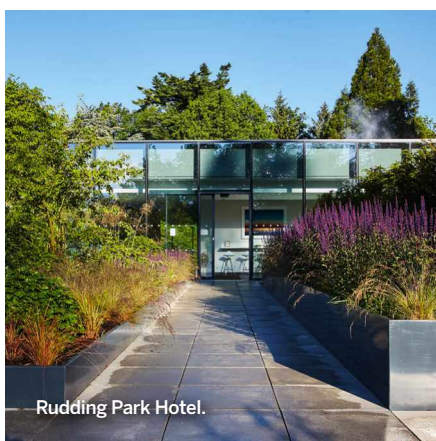
Rudding Park Hotel

**Harrogate, North Yorkshire,
designed by Matthew Wilson**

This grand, 90-bedroom hotel with a spa, two restaurants and a kitchen garden is a stately sight, standing in 300 acres of landscaped gardens and woodland. Since 2009, Matthew Wilson has been designing the outdoor spaces, including a tree-planting project, mini gardens outside bedrooms, the kitchen garden and a rooftop spa garden. The kitchen garden is the star, with trained fruit trees and 52 raised beds made from native oak from the grounds at Rudding Park. More than 500 different herbs, salads, vegetables and edible flowers, with an emphasis on the unusual, grow here, destined for the restaurant.
Tel 01423 871350, ruddingpark.co.uk ►



Thyme.



Rudding Park Hotel.



Allt-y-bela.

▷ Allt-y-bela B&B

Usk, Monmouthshire,
designed by Arne Maynard

Arne Maynard's unmistakable terracotta-coloured medieval farmhouse rises skyward from the green of his own garden, hidden down a secluded lane in quiet Monmouthshire countryside. Arne and William Collinson moved here in 2007 and have spent the past 15 years working on the garden, which features some of Arne's signature design elements. Built between 1420 and 1599, the house has a Renaissance tower created in the 17th century, and this romance is replicated throughout the garden – a place to lose oneself among the clipped topiary, pleached crab apples and wildflower meadow that beautify this secret valley. The tumbling roses, untamed grass and kitchen garden add to the fairy tale. Available for bed and breakfast.

Tel 07892 403103, alltybela.co.uk

Walwick Hall

Hexham, Northumberland,
designed by Alistair Baldwin

Metres from Hadrian's Wall, this Grade II-listed Georgian country house was turned into a ten-bedroom boutique hotel and spa in 2016. The grounds sprawl to 100 acres and Alistair Baldwin created gardens to soften the landscape on all sides of the hotel building, designed to immerse guests in plants. Deep borders are thick with cottage-garden plants,



Walwick Hall.

such as geraniums, brook thistle, alchemillas, astrantias and columbines, while hedged rose beds and squadrons of copper beech frame the dining terrace.

Tel 01434 620156, walwickhall.com

Durslade Farmhouse

Bruton, Somerset, designed by Piet Oudolf
This six-bedroom farmhouse is located at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, site of Piet Oudolf's perennial meadow. Renovated by Argentinian architect Luis Laplace, the interiors celebrate the natural antiquity of the building, combining original fittings with bold twists and unique artworks. A short walk away, through the historic farmyard buildings, now the art gallery, the Oudolf Field brims with colour in the summer months as its 17 curving, interlocking garden beds explode



Oudolf Field at Durslade Farmhouse.

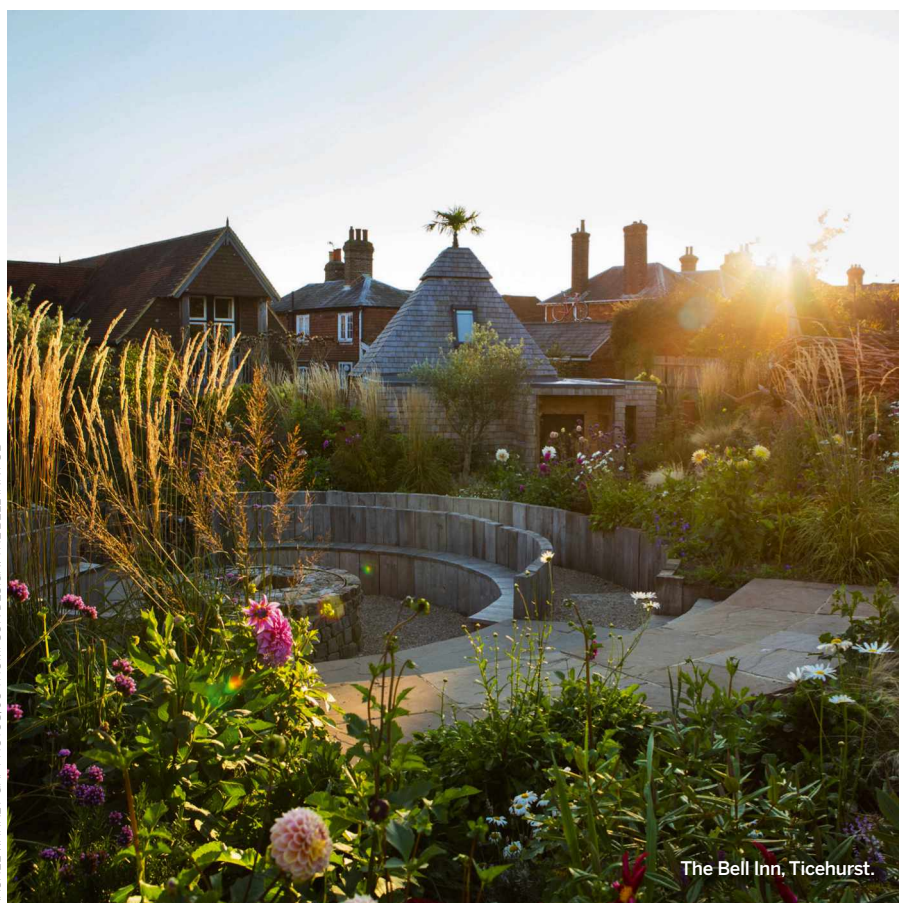
with rudbeckias, echinaceas, heleniums, sedums, actaeas and veronicastrums.

Tel 01749 814700, dursladefarmhouse.co.uk

The Bell Inn

Ticehurst, East Sussex,
designed by Jo Thompson

Whimsical, fun and kooky, this inn has rooms in the main building but also four guest lodges in the garden. The pub is very much for the community and this extends to the garden, with a design by Jo Thompson that befits all – including pollinators. As with the inn's interior, the garden too has unexpected quirky delights – tufts of grass and the odd banana plant protrude from the lodge roofs. A palisade of weathered timber sleepers and seating surrounds a central fire pit, encircled by borders woven through with ribbons of



The Bell Inn, Ticehurst.

ornamental grasses. Pops of seasonal colour in the planting come from spring bulbs and late-summer dahlias.

Tel 01580 200300, thebellinticehurst.com

Middleton Lodge Hotel

Middleton Tyas, North Yorkshire,
designed by Tom Stuart-Smith

The Grade II*-listed walled garden at Middleton Lodge, revived by a plan from Tom Stuart-Smith, now acts as a backdrop to the Fig House, a wedding venue on this 200-acre estate, which also has a hotel, cottages, and restaurant. Tom divided the two acres into four areas – spring, summer, prairie and kitchen gardens – with a central lawn planted with Indian bean trees and box topiary. Domed iron arbours are trained with pears, white roses and wisteria, while pathways weave and thread their way through the garden. Some rooms have direct access into the kitchen gardens, which can be explored by guests first thing in the morning.

Tel 01325 377977, middletonlodge.co.uk

Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons

Great Milton, Oxfordshire,
designed by Chris Beardshaw

Chris Beardshaw recently designed a wildflower meadow at Raymond Blanc's long-standing hotel and restaurant Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, planted beneath some old apple trees. The bountiful border has the

glamour and vibrancy of an herbaceous border but the informality of a traditional meadow. There is an endless succession of planting rewards throughout the seasons as Chris took inspiration from the robustness of the planting communities of native meadow. During summer, expect foxgloves mingling with goat's beard, snow rush and brunneras under the leafy apple boughs.

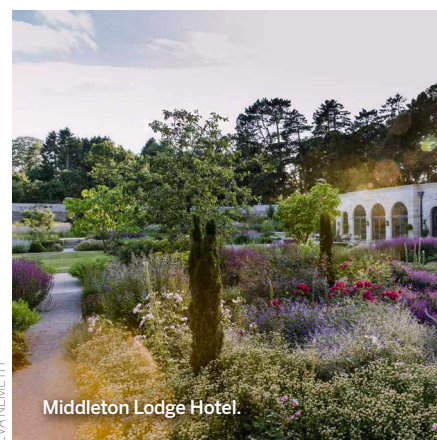
Tel 01844 278881, belmond.com

Sopwell House

St Albans, Hertfordshire,
designed by Ann-Marie Powell

In the grounds of Sopwell House, a luxury hotel in the Hertfordshire countryside, the spa gardens by Ann-Marie Powell are designed to feel like a tropical Balinese retreat. Ann-Marie and her team designed almost everything, from the three secluded outdoor hot tubs to day bed loungers beneath the canopies of specimen *Osmanthus heterophyllus*, and sculptural boundary screens. Bespoke glass screens were commissioned to bounce light into the space, which has a central rill, a six-metre copper water wall and bubbling water bowls. Elsewhere around the hotel are other traces of Ann-Marie's handiwork: the *Amelanchier x lamarkii* underplanted with *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle' at the front of the main hotel and a botanical garden for the hotel suites.

Tel 01727 864477, sopwellhouse.co.uk ▷



Middleton Lodge Hotel.



Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons.

Places to stay with a sense of design heritage

• Barnsley House, Barnsley, Gloucestershire

Once the home of renowned garden designer Rosemary Verey, the gardens of this luxury hotel remain a highlight. Tel 01285 740000, barnsleyhouse.com

• Glenapp Castle Hotel, Ballantrae, Ayrshire

Gertrude Jekyll designed the Italian garden at Glenapp Castle, which sits within the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Tel 01465 831212, glenappcastle.com

• Gravetye Manor, West Hoathly, East Sussex

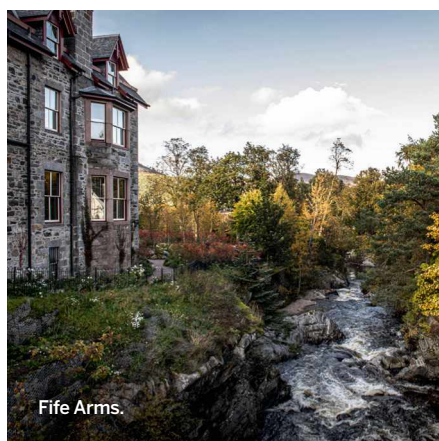
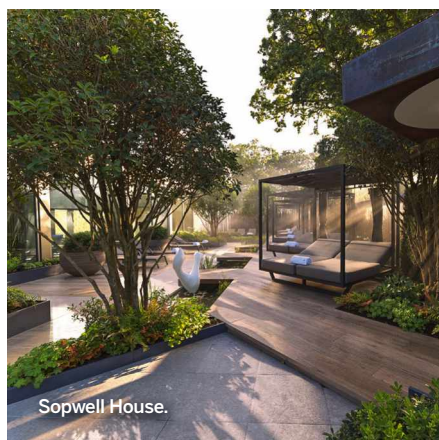
The gardens here, now managed by the hugely talented head gardener Tom Coward, were originally created by William Robinson in 1885 and are now considered one of the most important historic gardens in England. Tel 01342 810567, gravetyemanor.co.uk

• Hotel Endsleigh, Milton Abbot, Devon

The 18th-century landscape designer Humphry Repton created the fairy-tale gardens, woodlands, follies and grottos in the grounds of this Dartmoor hotel. Tel 01822 870000, hotelendsleigh.com

• Sissinghurst Castle Farmhouse, Sissinghurst, Kent

This bed and breakfast with nine bedrooms is 50 metres from the gates of Vita Sackville-West's world-famous garden. Tel 01580 720992, sissinghurstcastlefarmhouse.co.uk



JASON INGRAM

▷ The Fife Arms

**Braemar, Aberdeenshire,
designed by Jinny Blom**

Reinvented and reopened in 2018 by Iwan and Manuela Wirth of Hauser & Wirth, this 46-bedroom Victorian coaching inn has a garden by Jinny Blom, who was commissioned to weave a new story for the grounds overlooking the River Clunie. Planting takes its cues from the Victorian Scottish baronial era, plant hunters and folklore.

Tel 01339 720200, thefearms.com

Tillingham Winery

**Peasmarsh, East Sussex,
designed by Marian Boswall**

Hidden away down winding lanes near Rye is an old farmstead called Tillingham, recently renovated and now home to a biodynamic vineyard and new winery, as well as 11 rooms in an old hop barn and an uber-hip restaurant. Marian Boswall is responsible for the naturalistic gravel garden covering the old farmyard, her concept borrowed from the 70 acres of surrounding farmland and designed to meld into it. The grid pattern of the vines informs the arrangement of the planting beds, which include plants such as *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* and *Verbena rigida* chosen for their pollinator appeal. Textured concrete, recycled farmyard metals and vessels from the wine making process anchor the scheme.

Tel 01797 208226, tillingham.com



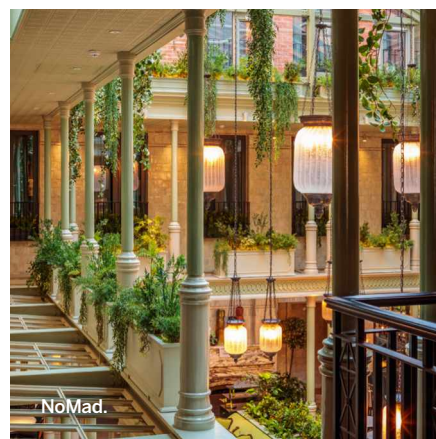
JASON INGRAM

The Newt in Somerset

**Bruton, Somerset, with new areas designed
by Lulu Urquhart and Adam Hunt**

The 30 acres of gardens of Hadspen House, what is now The Newt in Somerset, were at one point in their history designed by Penelope Hobhouse and later housed the walled garden of Canadian colourists Nori and Sandra Pope. The house is now a hotel and the grounds a visitor attraction. Guests can wander the themed borders, walled Parabola garden, potager, lawns, meadows and woodland. This summer, the new Roman Villa Gardens, designed by Lulu Urquhart and Adam Hunt, will open and will include a Roman-style planted flower meadow, heritage fruit trees and a medicinal garden.

Tel 01963 577750, thenewtinsomerset.com



CLIVE NICHOLS

The NoMad Hotel

**Covent Garden, London,
designed by Alasdair Cameron**

Alasdair Cameron and his team have created magical and enticing spaces for the ultra-fashionable and artsy NoMad hotel, which occupies the Grade II-listed former Bow Street Magistrates Court and police station. Plants trail lushly and exotically from countless planters placed around the hotel's three-tiered atrium with its magnificent domed glass roof. Lemon and orange trees are underplanted with a combination of ferns, including *Asplenium nidus* and *Asplenium 'Parvati'*, and *Pilea peperomioides*. Stairs are dressed with *Ficus lyrata*, *Monstera deliciosa* and *Thaumatococcus danianus*.

Tel 01343 612312, thenomadhotel.com



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Marina 6 Seat Oval Rope Weave Dining Set, sandstone, £2,699, Maze Living, 01440 767947, mazeliving.co.uk



FAMILY GATHERING

Maximus Teak Table and 8 San Francisco Chairs, £4,000, Luxus Home & Garden, 0333 772 9013, luxushomeandgarden.com



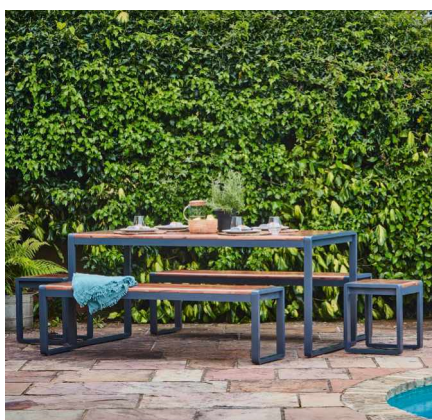
ROUND THE TABLE

Amy 4 Seater Dining Set, slate grey, £709.95, Lazy Susan, 01243 717197, lazysusanfurniture.co.uk



TEAK PERFORMANCE

Manutti Sunrise Garden Table and Chairs, teak scuro, £5,995 (table), £2,150 (per chair), Go Modern, 020 7731 9540, gomodern.co.uk



ROOM FOR MORE

Filey Table and Bench Set, £1,995, Graham & Green, 01225 418200, grahamandgreen.co.uk



RECYCLED PLASTICS

Nassau 4-seater Square Dining Set, mint green, £519.99, Lifestyle Garden, lifestylegarden.co.uk



STEEL STYLE

Southwold Rectangle Dining Table Set, £4,485, Harrod Horticultural, 0333 400 1500, harrodhorticultural.com



TABLE MANNERS

8 Seater Acacia Wood Garden Dining Set, £1,699, Beliani, 020 3318 8222, beliani.co.uk



LAZY SUNDAYS

Cheltenham 6-seater Rectangular Set, £3,355, Neptune, 01793 934011, neptune.com

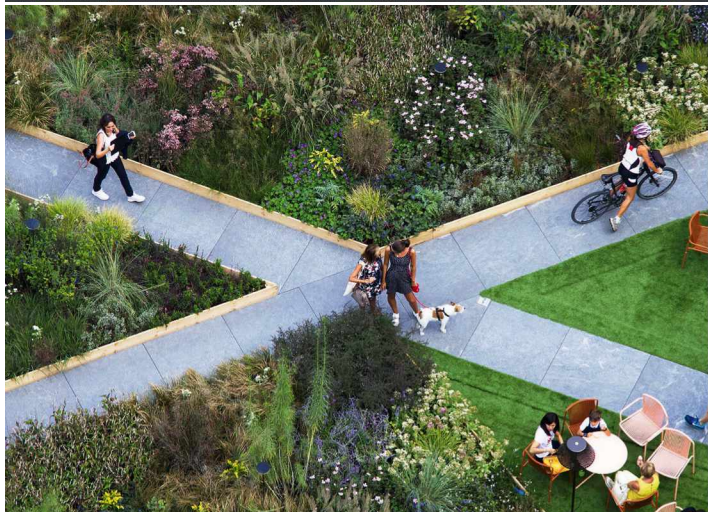
PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

8-25 September Bergamo's Piazza Vecchia is transformed into a green haven by planting designer Cassian Schmidt and students from German University Weihenstephan.

21 September Garden Masterclass hosts Annie Guilfoyle and Noel Kingsbury head up a workshop, joined by Cassian Schmidt and Bettina Jaugstetter.

22 September Valfredda Perennials seminar considering Chicago's Lurie Garden and its pioneering approach to urban landscaping.

23-24 September International Meeting of the Landscape and Garden conference with talks from eight internationally recognised creatives in the world of landscape and design.



8-25 SEPTEMBER 2022, BERGAMO, ITALY

FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE

Landscape Festival – I Maestri del Paesaggio: International Meeting of the Landscape and Garden

The International Meeting of the Landscape and Garden returns to Bergamo this September for its first in-person event in two years. The event gathers international experts to explore the idea of landscape as a dynamic interaction between humans and the natural world, and to consider ways in which we can best achieve a sustainable regeneration of our cities and green spaces. This year, debate centres around 'forgotten landscape' and brings

together architects, landscapers, garden designers and botanists to talk through their experiences and design philosophy.

All events are aimed at both professional horticulturists and designers, and interested members of the public. The event is a great opportunity to be part of a landscape-inspired, international gathering. You can take part in a range of activities, or simply immerse yourself in the transformation of this historic city into a plant-filled haven.

Landscape and Garden weekend conference

Date 23-24 September **Venue** Bergamo, Italy **Cost** €180*.

Full details of the conference and all events can be found at imaestridelpaesaggio.it

*Special Offer – there is a discount of 30% for the first 20 *Gardens Illustrated* readers who sign up to I Maestri del Paesaggio as a new member.



The annual conference of I Maestri del Paesaggio transforms the Italian city of Bergamo with greened squares, cloisters and installations that celebrate landscape design.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Landscape and Garden conference: 23-24 September 2022 held in the Teatro Sociale and including lectures, talks and videos from an international line up of experts including:

Kate Cullity (Australia)

Founding director of landscape architecture and urban design practice TCL, known for her culturally interpretative work.

Gareth Edwards (UK)

An associate of SOM, a collective of designers, architects and engineers with a focus on future city planning.

Juan Grimm (Chile)

Known as 'the father of Chilean landscape architecture', Juan's work uses native plants to create naturally harmonious parks and gardens.

Bernard Trainor (USA)

Founding principal and design director of California-based Ground Studio.

John Little (UK)

Founder of the Grass Roof Company, bringing wild landscapes and green-roofed structures into schools, nature reserves and private gardens.

Eric Lenoir (France)

Self-styled 'punk' gardener, nurseryman and writer, and advocate of a low-input, environmentally friendly style.

Ngoc Minh Ngo (USA)

Photographer of interiors, landscapes and gardens.

Luciano Pia (Italy)

Biophilic architect of the tree-wrapped 25 Green apartments in Turin, for whom vegetation is a fundamental part of his designs.

WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

• Garden Masterclass: 21 September 2022, Bergamo (€250)

Garden Masterclass founders **Annie Guifoyle** and **Noel Kingsbury** will be joined by **Cassian Schmidt**, planting expert and director of the world-renowned German research garden Hermannshof, and landscape architect **Bettina Jaustetter**, for a one-day workshop entitled Learning from Nature. This Garden Masterclass edition will start with a talk and discussion before heading out into the town for a practical, hands-on session. Sala dei Giuristi, 9.30am-5.30pm.

• Valfredda Perennials Seminar: 22 September 2022 (€150)

Dedicated to one of the most internationally inspired projects: the Lurie Garden in the heart of Chicago. This extraordinary park, designed by Piet Oudolf at the beginning of the millennium, is considered as one of the most famous and iconic works of contemporary landscaping and a model for the development of sustainable urban projects.

Together with **Terry Guen**, founder of the Chicago design studio Terry Guen Design Associates, and garden designers **Roy Diblik** and **Austin Eischeid**, the seminar looks at the Lurie Garden project in more depth and considers the ensuing collaborations and relationships that have led to the development of a revolutionary idea of urban landscaping.

For details of events and booking options go to imaestridelpaesaggio.it and click on Book Now



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Embrace longer days with simple silhouettes and breathable fabrics; the canvas for a palette of vibrant, sun-warmed colour. Evocative of the way that abstract artist Rose Hilton captured the romance of life along the Cornish coast, Seasalt has mirrored her pared-back brushstrokes and soft curves to carefully balance light, colour and shape. Each piece has been carefully crafted to move with you as you flow through the season. Timeless and considered, they're made to be loved, lived in and woven with memories of endless summer days.

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A unique insight into how Willow arranges, grows and sources flowers and plants.

Indoor gardening masterclass with James Wong

This course teaches you tips and tricks to not only keep plants happy but how to make them look their best.

A year of cut flowers with The Land Gardeners

Discover how to grow year-round flowers with top UK gardeners and designers Henrietta



Courtauld and Bridget Elworthy of The Land Gardeners.

Grow a spectacular garden in pots with Arthur Parkinson

Arthur teaches you how to turn even the smallest of outdoor spaces into a beautiful haven full of colour, excitement and blooms.



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You want your garden to smell as good as it looks, and with Sarah Raven's collection of perfectly scented perennials you can have plants that combine beauty with gorgeous fragrance. Here are some of Sarah's picks.

Gardenia jasminoides 'Kleim's Hardy'

The pretty spiral flowers come out above their glossy, dark green leaves to fill their corner with scent. You see these in pots all over Greece, where I fell in love with them. This is a new and hardier cultivar.

Matthiola incana 'Pillow Talk'

Matthiola incana is one of the most scented flowers in my garden. It flowers from spring to midsummer and a few stems will fill a whole room with fragrance. Easy to grow and unmissable.

Phlox divaricata 'Clouds of Perfume'

This compact phlox is one of my favourite perennials for a sunny spring border or container, with clouds of long-lasting flowers.

To redeem this fantastic offer, enter code **GI22MAYX** at sarahraven.com



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Recovering your sofa and other furniture is a fantastic eco-friendly way to update your living room, as you'll be breathing new life into old furniture rather than buying something new. Want to make your living room even more eco-friendly? Here are Plumbs' top three tips.

Save energy with LED lightbulbs

Simply switch from halogen bulbs to LED alternatives and you'll save a whopping 90 per cent energy. These bright beauties can last for 25 to 30 years (brand and usage depending). And don't worry about sacrificing quality for cost-saving; LED lightbulbs perform just as brilliantly as their halogen cousins. For extra savings, and to create a peaceful ambience, treat your home to dimmable LED lights – you'll feel zen in no time.

Dress your windows for the seasons

You don't want to crank up the central heating, only for it to escape straight out of your double glazing. On the other hand, when summer rolls around, those thick curtains will retain high temperatures in your lounge – and leave you blasting the energy-guzzling air-con to keep cool. Not ideal. That's why you'll need to change your curtains with the seasons. In the



winter months, for example, we recommend a pair of thick and luxurious curtains, while swapping in a pair of blinds for the summer will keep you in Mother Earth's good books.

Concoct your own cleaning solutions

Not every eco-friendly idea is about changing your décor – you can go green just by tweaking the way you clean. You don't need to trawl the supermarkets to find an alternative, as a simple mix of bicarbonate of soda, white vinegar and water will clear up spills and stains, no problem.

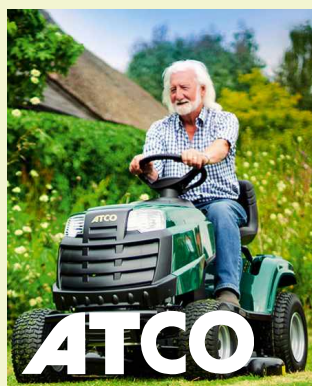
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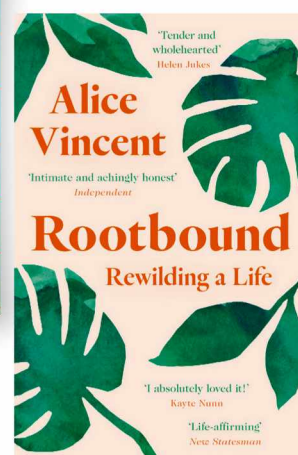
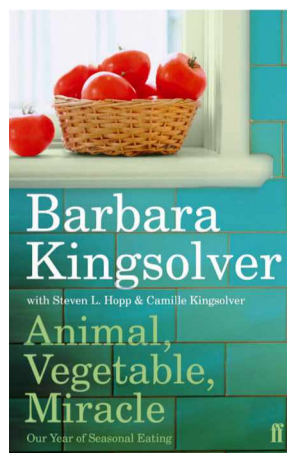
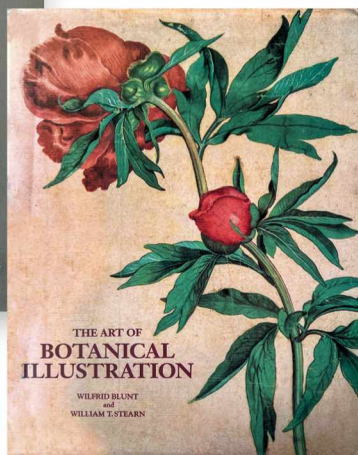
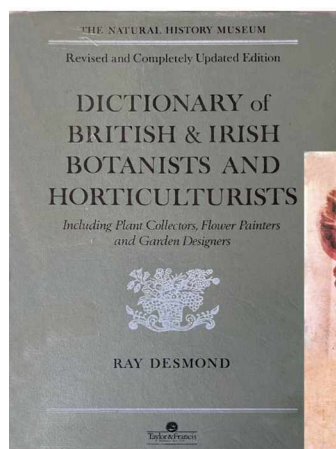
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DOWNTOOLS

Book recommendations, competition, the crossword, and a gardener's weekend in...

Summer reads

With the lazy days of summer comes the inviting prospect of lying back to while away a few hours in the company of a good book. We asked a selection of leading garden writers, gardeners and horticulturists to recommend the gardening books they most often take down from the shelf when looking for inspiration.



Anna Pavord

Anna Pavord is a garden writer.

DICTIONARY OF BRITISH AND IRISH BOTANISTS

by Ray Desmond

CRC Press, ISBN 978-0850668438

Out of print but search online for secondhand copies
The two books I've chosen aren't ones that you'd take to the beach. Too heavy for a start. The first is the book that I asked to have with me when I was a castaway on BBC Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs*. It is Ray Desmond's *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturists*, published in 1994. A bit dry you might think. But you'd be wrong. Desmond is the kind of miracle that does not exist any more: meticulous but never dry, scholarly but totally engaging. I love garden history in all its forms and can dip anywhere into the 800 pages of this book and be absorbed. Why is the Baron de Soutellin here? He rediscovered *Narcissus cyclamineus* in the wild. Who else remembers Sarah Coleman who in the 1820s ran a nursery in Tottenham? Gradually the dictionary enmeshes you in a vast, intricate web of plantspeople and gardeners that spans 500 years.

THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION

by Wilfrid Blunt and William T. Stearn

ACC Art Books, £35, ISBN 978-1851491773

From several shelves of books about botanical art, I most often reach for *The Art of Botanical Illustration* by Wilfrid Blunt and William Stearn (1994). This isn't a how-to manual, but a much rarer thing: a history of flower painting from a wall painting of a Madonna lily at Knossos that dates from around 1550 BCE to the anatomically precise water colours of Arthur Harry Church made in the 20th century. It's particularly good on the Renaissance, giving a wonderful insight into the gradual shift away from myth and magic to the microscopic precision of the paintings of Nicolas Robert and Georg Ehret. It's not only restful, but restorative to gaze at these pictures from a pre-Instagram age, to forsake for a while the twitchy practice of click and forget. The images shown in the Blunt-Stearn book show centuries of care, love and a wonderful delight in the complexity of nature.

Claire Ratinon

Claire is a writer and organic food grower.

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MIRACLE : OUR YEAR OF SEASONAL EATING

by Barbara Kingsolver

Faber & Faber, £12.99, ISBN 978-0571233571

My RHS Level 2 Horticulture tutor recommended this book to me, and it was the first text I'd encountered that depicted the act of cultivating food and the edible growing season as a narrative. Best known for her novels, Kingsolver is a master storyteller and she skilfully recounts a year where she and her family attempted to live off the land, bar a handful of luxury items. By employing the most joyful prose, deft interrogation of the systems that feed us and a necessary acknowledgment of the dedication, skill and hard graft that goes into growing food, this book somehow manages to inspire while exploding romanticised notions of bucolic self-sufficiency with a hearty dose of realism. I've bought multiple copies of *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* but I don't own one now because I've given them all away to friends, urging them to read it whenever I can.

ROOTBOUND: REWILDING A LIFE

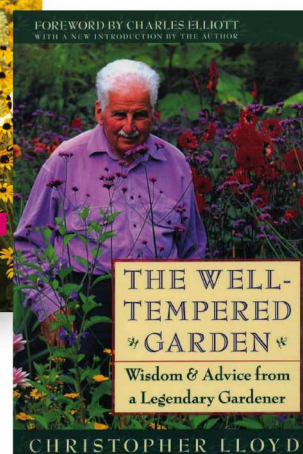
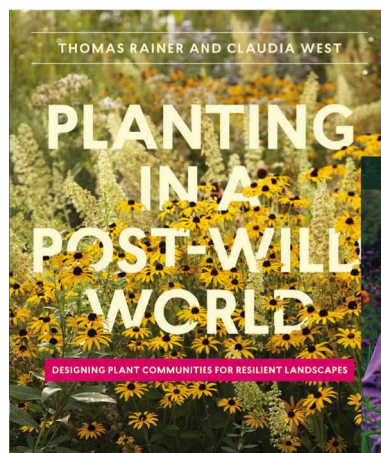
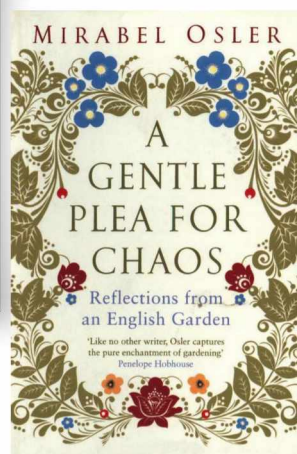
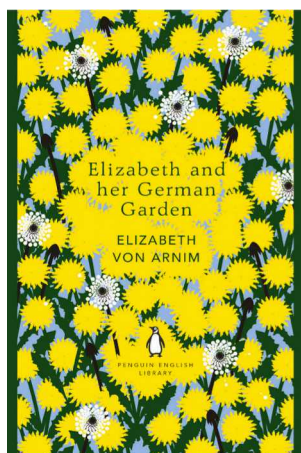
by Alice Vincent

Canongate Books, £9.99, ISBN 978-1786897725

Rootbound is a book that tells the story of moving from heartbreak through healing and coming back around to love, all while discovering how the alchemy of growing plants can steady a wayward soul. This book deepened my appreciation for the green spaces of London – the city where I realised my food-growing ambitions – while offering snippets of botanical insight and gardening history, all woven through a very human, very heart-centred story. I read *Rootbound* at a time when I was coming to truly understand the intimacy I felt with the plants I nurtured. A time when I was beginning to write myself about the role growing had played in helping me see myself as a being who needs to deeply sense my connection to the natural world in order to feel whole. If Alice Vincent hadn't written *Rootbound*, I'm quite certain I would never have found the courage to write my own story and, for that, I am eternally grateful that *Rootbound* exists.

Read a review of Claire's new book, *Unearthed*, in the July issue.

SUMMER READING



Isabel Bannerman

Isabel Bannerman is a garden designer.

ELIZABETH AND HER GERMAN GARDEN

by Elizabeth von Arnim

Penguin, £6.99, ISBN 978-0241341292

Mary Annette Beauchamp, born in Australia, was brought up in Europe in Bohemian circles. In 1898 she wrote this instantly best-selling novel under her married name although she is now better known for her later books, particularly *Enchanted April*. A fictionalised account of living with her children and German husband – ‘the Man of Wrath’ – in Pomerania, this book is a semi-autobiographical account of making a garden, although not in the same way you or I make gardens as it would have been ‘indecent’ to get stuck in as an important lady at the time, although later in life she really gardened. Funny and vibrant von Arnim discovers that the path to joy lies in having a garden, rather than a room, of one’s own to escape husband, family – ‘relations are like drugs, useful sometimes, and even pleasant, if taken in small quantities and seldom, but dreadfully pernicious on the whole, and the truly wise avoid them’ – and servants, mocking her gardening mistakes. Her love for lilacs, Madonna lilies and roses is altogether captivating.

A GENTLE PLEA FOR CHAOS: REFLECTIONS FROM AN ENGLISH GARDEN

by Mirabel Osler

Bloomsbury Publishing, £12.99, ISBN 978-1408817896

Writing a small book about making a garden at our new house, I turned again to this text. Memory told me that Osler’s ethos was uncommonly akin to mine. Written at the end of the 1980s, a decade when the haughty lady horticulturists had exported the English ‘supergarden’ in books and reality worldwide, this book was a blast of fresh air. Osler started garden writing at my ripe age, living near Ludlow, and wrote for the journal *Hortus*, as well as award-winning books. Timeless and evocative, vivid and dreamy, opinionated and dryly amusing, this book has never been out of print. In not-so-gentle language, it is an intimate story of how she and husband Michael let the garden take over their lives. She advocated a controlled disorder, less dominance over things, more intimate understanding and enjoyment. This lesson is more salient than ever.

Errol Reuben Fernandes

Errol is head of horticulture at the Horniman Museum and Gardens.

PLANTING IN A POST-WILD WORLD: DESIGNING PLANT COMMUNITIES FOR RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

by Thomas Rainer and Claudia West

Workman, £25, ISBN 978-1604695533

A truly innovative guide to horticulture and garden design. It speaks to the zeitgeist of contemporary gardening practice, being guided by observations in nature, our understanding of the soil, sustainable approaches and climate change – all under the veil of good design. Thomas Rainer is a landscape architect and Claudia West a wholesale perennial grower, so they know their subject inside out. Their advice is applicable to larger landscapes as well as smaller ones – even planters. Their fundamental message is to think in terms of ‘vegetations’ – plant communities that thrive alongside each other. It’s not a new message, but it’s from a design perspective. The ideas not only take aspect into account but also soil, topography and the local climate in summer and winter: dry, wet, mild etc. They also state that ‘plant stress’ (growing plants ‘hard’ with no coddling) is an asset – an idea championed by Great Dixter and Beth Chatto and an increasing number of growers. Everyone should read this book.

THE WELL-TEMPERED GARDEN

by Christopher Lloyd

Orion Publishing, £16.99, ISBN 978-1780227825

I return to this book again and again, sometimes for knowledge and advice but more often than not for the late Christopher Lloyd’s dry sense of humour and entertainment. Lloyd writes so beautifully of his experience of gardening at his home, Great Dixter, effortlessly conveying his colour, personality and opinion within the pages. Lloyd was a character who was larger than life, often sporting a colourful shirt, a hand-knitted waistcoat and an avant-garde approach to gardening. Clashing colours, playful juxtaposition, vastly knowledgeable, yet never taking the subject of gardening too seriously and always displaying the confidence to rip up the rule book. This is a wonderfully conversational read that leaves you feeling as though you have wandered the paths up to his Peacock Garden, discussing the best time to go about your pruning with great man himself. The best time according to Lloyd, of course, is when one has the time and inclination, and the tool in the hand.



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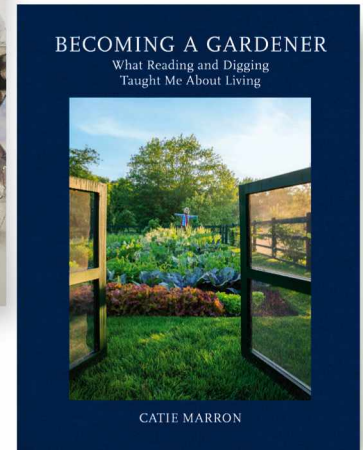
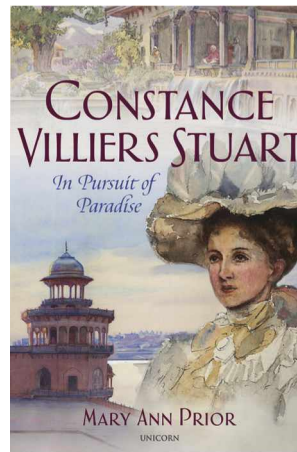
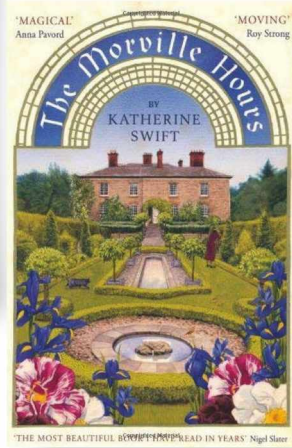
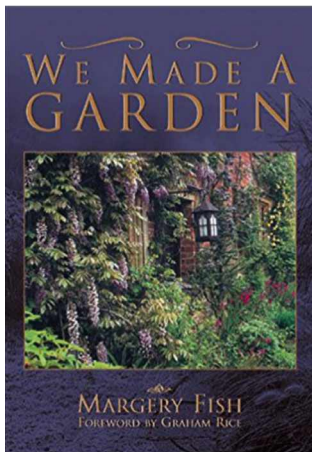
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SUMMER READING



Alice Vincent

Alice Vincent is a garden writer.

WE MADE A GARDEN

by Margery Fish

Pavilion Books, £9.99, ISBN 978-1849943642

It was only after I had read this book that I learned how large Margery Fish's legacy loomed in British horticulture. This was a happy accident, I think, as Margery's frank, and often funny, record of redefining the modern English cottage garden at her home of East Lambrook Manor in Somerset unfolds best when you don't quite know what the outcome will be. Mrs Fish's Garden, as those who still tend to it call it, heaves with visitors most weeks of the year, but this book allows the reader to conjure an exquisite image through her words. Fish writes with the clean, plain passion of the plant-devoted and determined, and what I find most inspiring about her account of the garden is her growing confidence as the years pass and, in the wake of her husband Walter's death, a permission-granting of taking the garden on as her own.

THE MORVILLE HOURS: THE STORY OF A GARDEN

by Katherine Swift

Bloomsbury Publishing, £14.99, ISBN 978-0747598237

Katherine Swift's *The Morville Hours* is like one of those plants you learn about and then see in all the best gardens, quietly astonished that it took you so long to find. It was published in 2008, and is usually on book shops' gardening shelves, but I didn't read it until 2020, during that locked-down winter, finding myself transported from the same south London walls to the crisped lawns and moonlight of New Year's Eve in slumbering Shropshire, where Swift begins her richly layered story of The Dower House Garden at Morville. The book's chronology spans years and hours simultaneously; Swift bases its structure on the ancient Hours of the Divine Office, used by monks. But in gardening time is both everything and nothing at all, making it an ideal summer read, too. As Swift writes: 'In the garden, where I was acutely aware of the passage of time there was paradoxically the feeling of having all the time in the world, of hours and days stretching and expanding into a shimmering pool of now.'

Look out for Alice's new monthly column starting in the July issue.

Christopher Woodward

Christopher Woodward is director of the Garden Museum.

CONSTANCE VILLIERS STUART: IN PURSUIT OF PARADISE

by Mary Ann Prior

Unicorn Publishing Group, £30, ISBN 978-1914414435

Garden history gets a new heroine in Constance Villiers-Stuart. Mary Ann Prior's biography begins with a surprise discovery in a Norfolk country house where Villiers-Stuart lived until her death in 1966. Out of a suitcase tumbled diaries and sketchbooks, revealing a remarkable life. The heiress to a cotton fortune, she married a soldier and when he was posted to India, became an expert on Mughal gardens, and friends with the Maharajah of Kashmir and the Begum of Bhopal. Her illustrated *Gardens of the Great Mughals* (1913) concluded with a plea for the gardens of New Delhi to be Indian, not English in style. During the First World War, her husband Patrick was posted to Salonica (now Thessaloniki in Greece). And that gives us one of the most startling garden images you will see all year: photographed from a biplane, ornamental parterres laid out by soldiers around their garrison bell-tents. A reminder that the most interesting gardeners are never just gardeners.

BECOMING A GARDENER: WHAT READING AND DIGGING TAUGHT ME ABOUT LIVING

by Catie Marron

Harper Collins, £40, ISBN 978-0062963611

In *Becoming a Gardener* the writer Catie Marron describes planting a garden around a new family house in Connecticut. She shares her garden as a sequence of decisions, beginning with picking the right type of fence (something I obsess about). It's a modest perfectionism born of reverence towards a garden as a sacred thing. Marron was widowed shortly after buying the house and she feels her late husband's spirit as she digs with the hand-forged trowel, which was one of his last gifts. What I also loved is how she turns to her favourite writers for advice, from Cicero to Anna Pavord, as if they are her friends. Beverley Nichols is, as ever, the most quotable: 'you can no more stop a garden from walking, in spirit, into the house of a gardener than you can stop the sea from flowing, in spirit, into the house of a sailor'. A generous book and a beautiful garden.

READER COMPETITION

Win a luxury gardens break in Surrey*

The Talbot Hotel in Surrey is offering one *Gardens Illustrated* competition winner the chance to relax and unwind in style with a luxury two-night stay that also includes tickets to the RHS flagship gardens at Wisley.

Located in the picturesque village of Ripley in heart of Surrey, The Talbot Hotel is renowned as a coaching inn with a 500-year history. Dating back to 1453, the inn originally served the needs of Newark Priory. By the mid 18th-century, it had become a staging post and post office for the Royal Mail, and boasts Lord Nelson among its illustrious 18th-century guests. Today, it retains much of its historic character, alongside comfortable rooms and a restaurant.

It is also less than two miles from RHS Garden Wisley, making it the ideal base for exploring these extensive gardens, with their richly planted borders, luscious rose gardens and state-of-the-art glasshouse. Find out more at rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley

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- a) Emma
- b) Horatia
- c) Victoria

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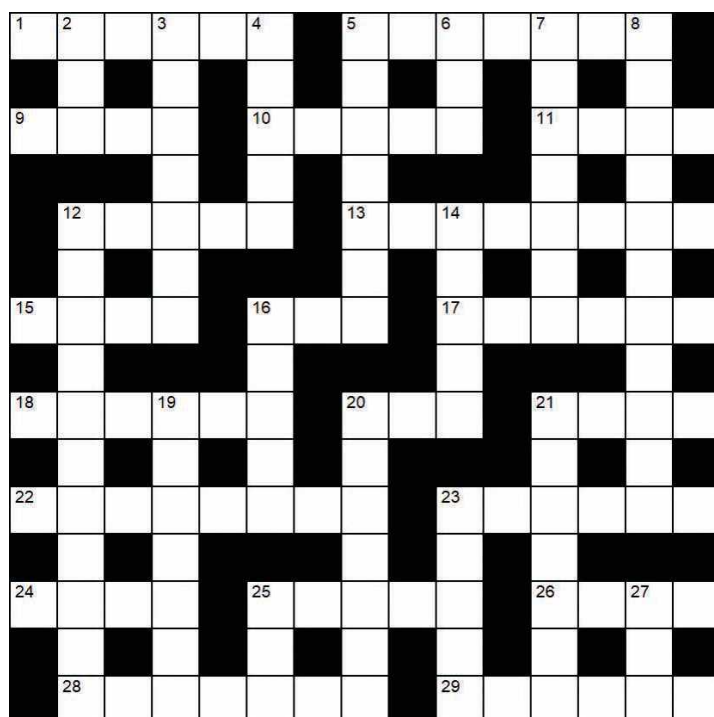
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*Prize is based on two sharing a Deluxe double/twin room, valid for six months from the date of nomination, excluding Christmas, New Year, Easter and Bank Holidays and subject to availability. Dinner based on a £25 per person allowance.

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Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Genus of mat-forming plant, New Zealand burr... doctor removed from *Dracaena* (6)
 5 Hortensia version of *Hydrangea macrophylla* (7)
 9 A Cedric Morris-bred white iris and a precious stone (4)
 10 Genus of featherleaf 'Jelly Palm' – a tub I arranged (5)
 11 Seed containers of peas, wisteria, etc (4)
 12 See 21 across
 13 Common name of spinach-like plant, *Atriplex hortensis* var. *rubra* – 'Chard Roe', oddly (3,5)
 15 A bit of Honesty eventually... is an eye sore! (4)
 16 See 2 down
 17 The right amount of moisture and ____ will cause seeds to germinate (6)
 18 See 2 down
 20 Essential sort of winged tree fruit (3)
 21/12 across A cosmea with fluted flowers, '____' – that lures children away? (4,5)
 22 Genus of foamflower with star-shaped flower panicles – I rate all 'fantastic!' (8)
 23 Du Maurier's first shrub with fragrant flower clusters (6)
 24 Genus of certain floribundas (4)
 25 Dwarf, compact cherry tomato F1 hybrid – a symbolic thing (5)
 26 Edible root of plant, aka taro, genus *Colocasia* – partly died down (4)
 28 Genus of umbrella plant aka Indian rhubarb – sort of ram, dear (7)

- 29 Sliding window frames... worn by winning contestants? (6)

DOWN

- 2/16 and 18 across Common name of plant in genus *Cobaea* – part of tea service? (3,3,6)
 3 A named sweet pea with deep pink flowers – which briefly hides the sun? (7)
 4 Pale-yellow *Clematis koreana*, RHS 2016 winner – 'Traffic Light'? (5)
 5 Fully grown and ripe (7)
 6 A vegetable if *Pisum* but *Lathyrus* if it's sweet (3)
 7 Regal name of a yellow, flared-trumpet narcissus (7)
 8 Plant in *Primula* family with cyclamen-like flowers, awfully decadent – ooh! (11)
 12 Common name of *Calendula officinalis* – import a gold variety (3,8)
 14 Like the sofy hairy leaves of lamb's ears (5)
 16 Month... in which, initially, amateur plantsmen raise *Iris lutescens* (5)
 19 A *Sempervivum* with deep red leaves in summer... 'Barbary Pirate' (7)
 20 Genus of scabious-like plant – ain't a UK sort! (7)
 21 Sprinkles... plants of *Capsicum* genus? (7)
 23 Semi-circular structures of Eden Project's biomes (5)
 25 To secure impatiens, partly (3)
 27 Colour obtained from eg indigo plant (3)

* Solutions to this issue's crossword will be printed in the July issue

SOLUTIONS TO JUNE'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Clarkias 6 Sumach 9 Eric 10 Ovary 11 Nero 12 Papery 13 Honeydew 15 Spirals 17/26 Love-in-a-mist 19 Bonsai 20 Winston 21 Self-heal 23 Aucuba 25 Tufa 27 Loins 29 Marmande.
 DOWN 2 Larva 3 Rockeries 4 Ivory 5 Stachys 6 Sky 7 Monty 8/28 Cornelian cherry 14 Nylon 15 Smoke bush 16 Anise 18 Viticella 20 William 22 Flair 23 Attar 24 Blind 26 Amy.

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Northiam, East Sussex TN31 6PH | greatdixter.co.uk



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Englefield Green, Surrey TW20 0UJ | windsorgreatpark.co.uk



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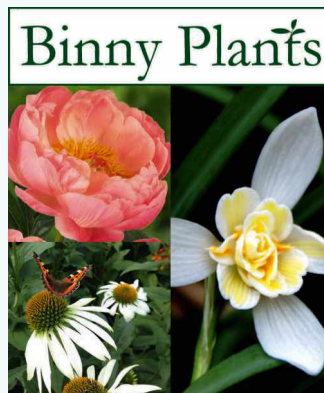
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GARDENS

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JULY

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How to spend a gardener's weekend in...

Amsterdam

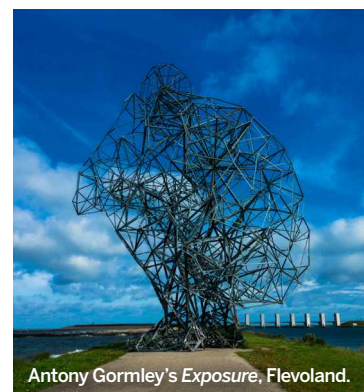
The Dutch city best known for its canals, museums and coffee houses, is also packed with gardens large and small – and has a garden culture to rival that of the UK

Tuin (garden) might be the only Dutch word you'll need for a weekend in Amsterdam; the tightly packed city is garden-oriented to such a degree that everything seems to have a small *tuin* attached, from museums to the *fêted* canal houses, which have an open gardens weekend in June. Expertise in growing, gardening and tool craftsmanship make this an easy-to-reach recharge point.

Eating among plants

De Kas is the ultimate garden-to-table destination in the Netherlands, and was certainly one of the first, when Gert Jan Hageman converted the city's former municipal nursery in Frankendael Park into a mainly plant-based restaurant in 2000. Now a complex of greenhouses old and new, most of the ingredients are brought in from its garden in the Beemster region. Across the park, in an old coach house that formed part of an 18th-century estate, **Merkelbach** is a slow-food restaurant that is only open during the day. Sample the juniper-based spirit *jenever* at the bucolic distillery **Proeflokaal 't Nieuwe Diep** in Flevopark. Highly regarded **Vuurtoreneiland** is on a

writes Noel Kingsbury in *Gardens Under Big Skies* (Filbert Press, 2021) and one way of experiencing the latest wave of garden design, in a traditional setting, is through the annual open gardens in the city's canal belt, for a few days around the summer solstice. For historical context, several canal houses and gardens are permanently accessible as museums, such as delightful **Van Loon** and the photography museum at **Huis Marseille**. Behind **Huis Willet-Holthuysen**, an immaculate *parterre de broderie* is a lesson in coloured gravel. For something completely different, the small zoo, **Artis**, in

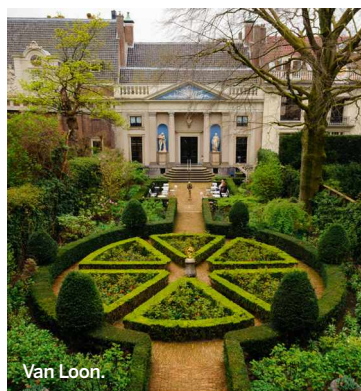


Antony Gormley's *Exposure*, Flevoland.

with ditches. Smaller **Heempark** at Anstelveen is the place to inspect native wildflowers.

Flower culture

The Miracle Garden in West Amsterdam was conceived by the artist and gardener Elspeth Diederix for a competition (which she won) to 'develop a work of art for Amsterdam that represents the world of flowers, and brings plants closer to people'. It is much loved, and photographed. **Hortus Botanicus** has a memorable glasshouse butterfly population, and a good café in the garden. Outside of Amsterdam in **Weesp**, the horticulturist and tulip expert Jacqueline van der Kloet has a tea garden, which she describes as her calling card – borders are a laboratory for her planting combinations of bulbs and herbaceous plants. Even outside of the tulip season, the **Museum de Zwarte Tulp** (Museum of the Black Tulip) is worth a visit. Dedicated to all things tulipular, it's located near the bulb fields of Keukenhof.



Van Loon.

De Plantage, is recommended by designer Joost Emmerik: "It feels like a garden, with lots of detail to the planting – which is fed to the animals."

Cycle seeing and Floriade

Joost Emmerik is one of the Dutch designers who has been involved with the gardens at 'The Voice of Urban Nature' pavilion at **Floriade**, the home-grown garden expo that is so ambitious it only takes place once a decade. This year's show is at Almere, to the east of the city, accessed via two new recycled bridges. Part of Floriade 2022's legacy will be a new urban district, Hortus. Public transport and shared bicycles make it easy to leave the city briefly: dunes and beaches and some rare rolling hills can be found at **Zuid-Kennemerland National Park**, while a circuit of land art at **Flevoland** features work by the likes of Antony Gormley in a vast and fertile flatness,



De Kas.

tiny Amsterdam island reached by boat, where a new glasshouse next to an old lighthouse is the restaurant in summer. Lunch and dinner are cooked on an open fire, year-round.

Small city gardens

'The design of small gardens is certainly at a higher level of expertise and creativity here than elsewhere,'

Insider tips

Best outdoor brunch De School
Best lunch in a baroque garden Merkelbach
Best tea in a horticulturist's garden De Theetuin, Weesp
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Hortus Botanicus.

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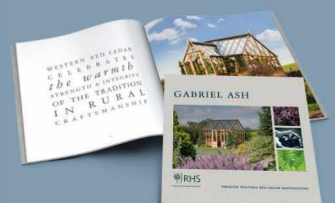
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